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Under Pressure to Be ‘Normal’: An Exploration of the Material-Discursive Practices that Affect the Experience of Disability and Gender in Employment.

By Gemma Bend BSc, MRes

A thesis submitted to The Open University Business School in fulfilment of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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Thesis abstract

Research has demonstrated that disabled women and men encounter barriers within employment. Often, these experiences are exacerbated when organisational practices fail to consider the embodied experiences of disabled women and men. This perpetuates experiences of inequality and exclusion within working spaces. This thesis draws on the theory of feminist posthumanist performativity to explore if and how the practices enacted within organisations oppress and exclude disabled women and men. This thesis is based on two studies from two types of employment in the United Kingdom: sheltered and mainstream employment. Study one employs ethnographic participant observations and semi-structured interviews within a manufacturing sheltered workshop. Study two utilises semi-structured interviews to elicit a wider view of disabled people's experiences in different types of mainstream employment.

The data analysis is organised around five themes: (a) inclusion, exclusion and discrimination; (b) cognitive and physical barriers to workplace participation; (c) practical and work-based support; (d) performative enactment of difference; and (e) resisting and disrupting oppressive practices. The findings demonstrate how materiality intra-acts with social discourses to affect the performative enactment of identities in the workplace. Furthermore, the analysis reveals how policies and practices enacted within organisations exclude or include employees through reproducing or challenging normative and essentialist conceptualisations of disability and gender.

The thesis' contribution to posthumanist performativity is threefold: Firstly the analysis critically explores how material-discursive practices enacted within contemporary systems of work constrain access to, and progression within, employment for disabled women and men. Secondly, the study adds evidence to the limited studies that explore how identities such as disability and gender are performatively enacted as forms of oppression. Thirdly, the thesis gives evidence of how the performative enactment of minority identities as forms of oppression are disrupted and challenged through strategies that emerge within a feminist posthumanist performative lens, specifically transformative affirmative ethics.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis explores how and why disabled women and men experience ongoing oppressive practices that exclude them from full societal participation. Theoretically, by drawing on feminist new materialism and feminist posthumanist performativity, the thesis explores how material-discursive practices (specifically the inseparability of the material and the discursive) enacted within the workplace and other spaces, performatively brings disability and gender into being. Within the thesis I problematise the normative and essentialist concepts of disability and gender by exploring the oppressive and ethical implications of the reinforcement of dominant social norms. Essentialist discourses refer to the grouping of bodies into classifications that suggests homogeneity for those who are given the label of a category, such as being disabled or a woman. Essentialist discourses then lead to the establishment of behavioural social norms that these individuals are judged against and held accountable to, regardless of how inaccurate they are which “creates frames for prejudiced behaviour, racism and dehumanization” (Zeromskyte and Wagner, 2017, p. 89). This research is thus vital, since employment uncertainty and hardships still characterise the working lives of disabled women and men (Romani et al, 2018; United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Career experiences and opportunities that are, or are not, available to disabled individuals can have a positive or a negative impact on their sense of self and their embodied experiences (Leiulfsrud et al., 2014, p. 1182). Research has shown that disabled individuals who have a healthy work environment can develop new skills and social networks which improves their economic and psychological well-being (Bogart, 2015; Dunn and Burcaw, 2013). Employment is thus important for an individual’s well-being.

This thesis focuses on data from two different types of employment: mainstream and sheltered employment. The review of literature revealed a gap in organisation studies comparing disabled individuals’ experiences of mainstream and alternative employment in the United Kingdom (UK). To address this, two studies were undertaken for this project. Study one employs ethnographic participant observations and semi-structured interviews within a manufacturing sheltered workshop in the UK. The study collects and analyses field notes and interview data to explore how societal norms, material phenomena and discursive practices (e.g. support mechanisms, organisational policies) and the material workspace have a relational affect on the experiences of disabled employees at the workshop. The term relational affects refer to how different forms of matter, including human and nonhuman bodies, and material phenomena and discursive practices, have the ongoing capacity to affect

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one another as they are relationally linked to one another (Fox and Alldred, 2017). Study two is based on semi-structured interviews with disabled workers within mainstream employment. Its aim is to elicit a broader view of how the material-discursive power relations and practices affect disabled people's experiences of mainstream employment. Both studies explore the mutually affective interactions between organisations and employees noting how disability and gender is performatively enacted within organisations, within bodies or between both organisations and bodies.

The power relations within material and discursive practices and their effects on the embodied experiences of disabled employees is explored through analysing the relationality and inseparability of subjects-objects, matter-meaning, nature-culture. Intra-action is a term coined by feminist new materialist scholar Karen Barad (2017) to replace the term 'interaction' by arguing that there are no pre-determined and separate bodies, objects, materiality. These elements these only materialise (come into being) in their relational exteriority (how these elements intra-act) with the other. The term intra-action emphasises the inseparability of the material (object) from the discursive (subject) (hereafter material-discursive) and supports the analysis of how matter (animate and inanimate) affects processes of knowing and being. For example, organisations are not a fixed singular entity, they exist through the relational intra-action of buildings, material objects, technology, people, money, and social/economic practices. Barad (1996, 2007) argues that all matter has the capacity to affect other matter in its relational intra-action with the other (defined as agentic affect¹). As a result knowing and being (or rather 'intra-active becoming') is seen to be performative (a doing), specifically it is the "ongoing performance of the world" (Barad, 2007, p. 149). In taking a feminist new materialist perspective, this research explores how the intra-actions within and between bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces such as employment affect knowing and being (or becoming) in employment. Additionally, the multiple material-discursive practices enacted at different times within and between bodies, objects, and spaces, (also known as assemblages²) are explored. The analysis reveals how policies and practices enacted within organisations include or exclude employees through maintaining, reinforcing, and/or challenging normative and essentialist conceptualisations of disability and gender. By drawing on a feminist new materialist perspective this thesis problematises the essentialist discourses that result in the grouping of bodies into

¹ Agentic affects is a term used to recognise the potential for all matter to affect knowing and being as all matter is bound within relational intra-actions that continuously alter the worlds becoming.

² Assemblages refers to the multiple material-discursive elements or factors that coalesce within a particular time and space to affect knowing and being, Assemblages are infinite in number as many overlap/connect with one another (see Deleuze and Guattari, 1988).

classifications that suggests homogeneity. This thesis then expands a social relational definition of disability by adding a material-discursive, or sociomaterial, approach.

1.1. Research rationale: Why disability and gender?

In western societies and across the world certain groups of individuals are ostracised on the basis of ascribed characteristics that highlight their difference from the historical and cultural dominant norms of a particular society. Historically, research has shown that disabled individuals and women have endured hardships and experience inequality regardless of their personal qualities and attributes (Goffman, 1963; Braidotti, 2013a). For disabled women, these hardships appear to be more pertinent, span their entire lifetime and include experiences of education (Lourens and Swartz, 2016; Najarian, 2008), employment (Baumberg, 2015), and parenthood (Walsh-Gallagher et al., 2012). Many argue that able-bodied white assumptions have become the norm resulting in the production and maintenance of minority/stereotyped/subordinate identities (Williams and Mavin, 2012). For instance, women, disabled individuals, or ethnic minorities are generally scrutinised against normative white able-bodied masculine expectations (Knights, 2019; Jammaers et al., 2016; Liddiard and Goodley, 2016). By drawing on feminist posthumanist performativity, this thesis seeks to critique the “humanist ideal of ‘Man’ as the allegedly universal measure of all things” which historically has resulted in the perpetual scrutiny of disabled individuals, women and all others who deviate from the norm (Braidotti, 2019, p. 32).

Scholars and activists have challenged normative assumptions and discourses which exclude disabled people, especially disabled women, from being fully included in society and work (Liddiard and Goodley, 2016). Prominent scholars within the field of critical disability studies argue that “research and theory on disability have never been more needed” (Goodley et al., 2019, p. 973). Goffman’s (1963) seminal work on stigmatised identity, despite being written over fifty years ago, remains applicable to current experiences. Goffman (1963, p. 12) explains that “when a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his [sic] category and attributes, his ‘social identity’”. Disabled individuals are still treated as lesser human beings in that they consistently experience inequalities in relation to basic rights such as access to employment and positions of decision-making. Similarly, women are still represented as subordinate to men across multiple social spaces. Contu (2020, p. 742) discusses that being female or having an impairment, especially a visible or obvious impairment, are markers etched into the flesh, which cannot be easily removed or made invisible:

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Plainly, such invisibility is much more difficult when your body (e.g. your physical features, skin colour, accent, manners, etc.) is always already marked by the traces of the systematic and sedimented asymmetries that make it always 'less' than what passes as (and performs) the norm.

Identity categories such as disability, woman, or black, are saturated with pre-conceived normative assumptions that are projected onto individuals who fit these social categories in a homogenous way (Kulik and Bainbridge, 2006, p. 27). This is especially so if one party has no prior knowledge of a person's abilities or cultural beliefs (Lindsay et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the oppressive normative and essentialist concepts of disability and/or gender remain contested (e.g. Watson, 2002). Many disabled individuals contest the assumption that having a disability makes them inspirational and that they are disadvantaged. These challenges appear more frequent for individuals with a congenital disorder which has always been part of their identity (Watson, 2002), compared to individuals who acquire a disability in later life (Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). Disabled scholars, such as Tom Shakespeare (2006, p. 198) stress that most of those with an impairment (noting the separation of impairment and disability) "have no desire to identify as disabled". An impairment relates to the physical/cognitive/neurological effects or symptoms within the body whereas a disability is seen as a form of oppression that manifests during interactions between bodies and spaces (Thomas, 1999). However, the term disability is often used to refer to impairment and vice versa. Stella Young, a disabled activist, who sadly passed away in 2014, has given numerous interviews on her stance on disability and gave a short TED Talk (a platform for short talks posted online), in which she states:

I am not here to inspire you. I am here to tell you that we have been lied to about disability. Yeah, we've been sold the lie that disability is a Bad Thing, capital B, capital T. It's a bad thing, and to live with a disability makes you exceptional. It's not a bad thing, and it doesn't make you exceptional.

(Young, 2014, 2 minutes 40 seconds into the talk)

Able-bodied and masculine norms and expectations within mainstream organisations can make it difficult to obtain employment for disabled individuals and women. As a result, some consider alternative employment, such as self-employment. Although self-employment offers more flexibility (e.g. setting working hours), barriers still remain. Disabled women, in particular, are far less likely to be self-employed (9%) than disabled men (21%) (Jones and Latrielle, 2011). Boman et al.'s. (2015) quantitative study found that the type of disability has an impact on the rate of employment. Boman et al. measured and

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controlled for intersecting variables, including education, age, gender, work-ability, ethnicity, and residential region, and found that individuals with communicative hearing impairments were more likely to be employed (89.2%) than those with psychological impairments (53%). Additional research (e.g. Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017) across western countries supports these findings. Boman et al.'s (2015, p. 127) intersectional analysis, looking at multiple forms of oppression attributed to intersecting identity categories, found that:

being a woman, having a low education level, being either very young or old and having partially or very impaired work ability, all lowered the probability of being employed. In this sense, the persons with disabilities encounter a multitude of barriers on the labour market.

Although analysing how intersectional identity categories affect employment rates, Boman et al. infer that certain disabled people were more likely to experience unemployment due to employers' attitudes; however, this inference is limited in its reach and is beyond the scope of their data. More qualitative and exploratory research is needed to confirm this. Although quantitative research provides a foundation of knowledge, such as identifying key issues and patterns of behaviours, the subsequent findings are limited. To illustrate, Boman et al.'s adoption of a quantitative method above has failed to further our understanding of disabled individuals' personal experiences of employment. Jammaers et al. (2016, p. 2) and Williams and Mavin (2012) agree that research on ableist assumptions has not paid enough "attention to how disabled subjects themselves engage with such discourses in the workplace". To address this the current project has widened the scope of inquiry to conduct a feminist posthumanist performative relational analysis to uncover how material-discursive practices intra-act within the workplace to affect the embodied experiences of disabled women and men.

1.2. (Un)defining disability and gender

This thesis argues that labels ascribed to individuals that classify them to fit specific social identities are inherently unstable and instead draws on a non-essentialist performative conceptualisation of knowing and being. Consequently, the study explores how relational factors/elements (e.g. (non)human, (in)animate, nature and culture) coalesce to affect knowing and being for those held accountable to established social norms in an organisational setting. Ascribing to a feminist posthumanist performative theoretical framework, I agree with Barad's (2014) problematisation of the term identity. She states that:

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the key is understanding that identity is not essence, fixity or givenness, but a contingent iterative performativity, thereby reworking this alleged conflict into an understanding of difference not as an absolute boundary between object and subject, here and there, now and then, this and that, but rather as the effects of enacted cuts *in a radical reworking of cause/effect*.

(Barad, 2014, p. 173-174, original emphasis).

There are many definitions, or conceptualisations, of identity. Some scholars “understand identity as a dynamic, emergent and ongoing process of becoming” (Corlett and Mavin, 2014, p. 236). Others see identity as:

an aspect of the person that develops over time (e.g., McLean & Pasupathi, 2012); a tool for individual and collective meaning-making (e.g., Hammack, 2010); a product of the modern project of social organization on the basis of categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual identity, religion, and the like (e.g., Warnke, 2008); and an opportunity for unity and division. In other words, identity transcends disciplines, levels of analysis, and planes of human experience in ways that bring sensibility and intelligibility to the muddle of human existence.

(Hammack, 2014, p. 25)

I, like other scholars, agree that disability and gender is performative (Butler, 1990, 1993; Barad, 2014). This means that identities such as gender or disability come into being (are actualised) through the performative enaction (the repetitive doing) of behaviours or actions, by other bodies or institutions. This occurs within particular spaces which are historically and socially associated with that particular identity (i.e. social norms). Bodies have thus become discursively and homogeneously associated with and held accountable to, and excluded in their deviance from, these established social norms via power relations. Consequently, the performative enactment of identity remains in place as long as these social norms are continuously reproduced or reperformed.

Over time certain identities have been subject to oppressive or privileged historical and cultural societal practices (i.e. power relations) (Butler, 1990). Identity categories are also generally seen as binary oppositions. When referring to identity concepts (e.g. man-woman, disabled-able-bodied, white-black), binaries are imbued with hierarchical discourses where one of the pair (e.g. men) are seen to be superior to the other (e.g. women). Knights (2015, p. 203, original emphasis) explains that “distinctions are in themselves not

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problematic and are indeed fundamental to analysis. It is only when the distinctions are *reified* and reflect and reinforce discriminatory and hierarchical judgments that they can be classed as binary in structure and content”. Additionally, the social norms attached to identities have also become routinely enacted within particular spaces (i.e. home, work) and organisational professions (e.g. men are better managers; women are better nurses) (Acker, 2012). The practices enacted within these spaces often have ethical consequences such as men are promoted faster than women which reproduce disability and gender as forms of oppression (Butler, 1993; Barad, 2007; Acker, 2012).

Within the thesis I problematise the binary framing of identities which reproduce essentialist discourses deeply embedded in society that lead to social inequalities (i.e. oppression). As identified by Feely (2016, p. 871) “when a body is ascribed one of these identities (e.g. ‘a person with a profound intellectual disability’), it is ‘over-coded’ and this prevents us from thinking creatively about the infinite number of things this body can or could do in different contexts”. I therefore explore how embedded social and organisational material-discursive practices, informed by dominant social norms, lead to sociomaterial exclusions on the basis for what those bodies are (i.e. disabled or female) rather than what they can do (i.e. their skills).

1.2.1. Defining disability

There is no consensual definition of disability (Palmer and Harley, 2012). In the UK the Equality Act (2010), chapter 15, states that “a person (P) has a disability if- (a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and (b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) definition covers “impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions”, and argues that a disability is not solely a health problem but is also a product of environmental and social restrictions in an individual’s life (WHO, 2015). This thesis aligns with Thomas’ (1999, p. 60) social relational model which defines disability as “a form of oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being”: this is discussed further below.

Disability and gender, as concepts, have been argued to be similar in that there are two elements, a biological/material element (sex; impairment) and a cultural/discursive element (disability; gender). These are often misused and confused in the everyday discourses used to represent these identity formations (i.e. impairment equals disability; sex equals gender). The theoretical framework feminist posthumanist performativity

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(specifically agential realism) adopted in this thesis, however, argues that knowing and being are precisely the inseparability of the material and discursive (Barad, 2007). The framework also acknowledges the complexity of space, time, and matter that surrounds bodies within the spaces they traverse (see Chapter 3). Notably, agential realism rejects an essentialist, normative, and binary laden framing of concepts, such as disability, and instead explores the unique intra-acting material-discursive practices (i.e. assemblages) that surround places and bodies. The theory accounts for the wider assemblage of historical, cultural, natural, political, social, scientific, and biological factors that intra-act within and throughout one another to create an agential cut (a particular moment in time) (Barad, 2007).

1.2.2. Models of disability

There are three major models of disability that academics and activists use to conceptualise disability: the medical model, the social model, and the social relational model (Goodley, 2014; Palmer and Harley, 2012). These models have been challenged and developed over time, as political and human rights activists argue that disability is more complex than the early dominant medical model conceptualised (Anderson and Carden-Coyne, 2007).

1.2.2.1. The medical model

The medical model argues that disability is the consequence of an individual's impairment, which results in the loss of bodily and social functioning (Grue, 2011, p. 540). The model conceptualises disability as an individual's "own personal misfortune-devoid of social cause or responsibility" (Areheart, 2008, p. 186). This feeds into the neoliberal ideal of personal responsibility for success/failure. Scholars argue that the medical model of disability led to the normative categories of disabled and non-disabled to become entrenched in western societies which have been hard to deconstruct (Areheart, 2008). The early work of Parsons (1951) reflects the dominant thinking of the medical model, where illness is described as 'deviant' behaviour when individuals are unable to "fulfil (sic) the institutionally defined expectations of one or more of the roles in which the individual is implicated in the society" (Parsons, 1951, p. 452). Historians exploring disability have stressed that the voices of disabled people were often not recorded and researchers can only draw upon skewed historical evidence from "the doctors' examination room, in records in institutions or in the propaganda of charities" (Anderson and Carden-Coyne, 2007, p. 447). A criticism of the medical model is the failure to recognise the impact of society on disabled individuals' ability to fully perform a societal role (Oliver, 1990). Furthermore, the assumptions that ill or disabled individuals have the 'inability' to go about their daily lives even if they chose to do so has been widely challenged (see Jammearns et al., 2016; Morris, 1991). Within the

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thesis the notion that disability is a lack of ability is problematised and, instead, it is argued that disability is a *form of oppression* (Thomas, 1999; Sang et al., 2016).

1.2.2.2. *The social model*

The social model's core argument is the belief that it is society which is disabling and not the individual's impairment (Oliver, 1990). Scholars and activists who adopt this model focus "on the ways in which disability is socially produced" and move away "from biomedically dominated agendas to discourses about politics and citizenship" (Hughes and Paterson, 1997, p. 325). For example, the model emphasises that it is society's fault when an individual in a wheelchair cannot access a public building due to the lack of ramps and elevators. There are, however, scholars who argue that despite the social model being dominant in western society remnants of the medical model remain. Donoghue (2003, p. 202) argues that in the United States of America (USA) "the Americans With Disabilities Act reproduces the medical definition by defining it as an inability to perform a 'normal' life activity". The UK's Equality Act (2010) has a similar definition of disability by referring to an ability to perform 'normal' day-to-day activities.

The social model of disability is also not reflected in the current welfare system in the UK which reinforces an individualised medical model of disability. For example, individuals have to 'perform' what they can and cannot do to multiple assessors (e.g. GPs, benefit claimant assessor) in order to receive a diagnosis and income support. An individual's (in)ability to perform is repeatedly tested throughout a disabled individual's life, such as assessing if they are (un)fit for work. The UK's Government Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) system of assessment has been heavily criticised in the last decade due to individuals being inappropriately judged as 'fit' for work, despite evidence to the contrary. This is evident by how often tribunals overturn the DWP's decisions (e.g. Bloom, 2019; Siddique, 2019; Fricker, 2016). In the UK the DWP have come under close scrutiny for their continued dehumanising approach that does not accurately account for individuals' lived experiences of their disability, nor the sociomaterial impact of their decisions on UK citizens' lives (McNiell et al., 2017). The DWP requires all individuals to adhere to a one-size-fits-all approach that is repeatedly criticised for its inaccessibility. The DWP's approach decreases the public's trust in the department's priorities to support individuals as human being with diverse needs rather than a number in the department's attempt to balance a spreadsheet (Glover, 2019).

1.2.2.3. *The social relational model*

The social relational model critiques the social model of disability for its dualist theorisation "wherein disability belongs to the 'social' whilst impairment belongs, in an essentialist

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fashion, to the ‘biological’” (Thomas, 1999, p. 140). A social relational model of disability, on the other hand, “changes the definition of disability” to acknowledge how impairment effects (the *private* lived reality of an impairment) *interacts* with a disability (the social oppression experienced during *public* social relations with others) (Shakespeare, 2014; Thomas 1999). As indicated above, I draw upon Thomas’ (1999) feminist and materialist formation of the social relational model and subsequent definition of disability. Thomas (1999, p. 60) defines disability as “a form of oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being”. Thomas (1999, p. 143) claims that her non-reductionist feminist and materialist approach to theorising disability “offers the best hope for understanding and explaining disability, impairment and impairment effects, and the gendered nature of these”. A social relational model of disability within a feminist materialist perspective, then, requires an “non-reductionist ontology of the body...which does not collapse into fixed, categorical, universalistic and biologically determinist ways of thinking” (Thomas, 1999, p. 143).

Compared with the social model, the social relational model acknowledged the interaction between the personal experiences of impairment effects *and* the social experience of disability as oppression. This definition is also supported by the empirical findings of other scholars such as Sang et al (2016) who explored the how ableist and gendered work practices oppressed employees with hidden impairments. Thomas and Corker (2002) discuss how despite individuals having different impairments they often endure similar oppressive practices (e.g. discrimination and prejudice) which restrict their participation within social spaces (Thomas and Corker, 2002). Such a position is questioned by Shakespeare (2014, p. 57) who argues that to “define disability entirely in terms of oppression risks obscuring the positive dimension of social relations which enable people with impairment”. Shakespeare (2014, p. 77) thus defines disability as “the outcome of the interaction between individual and contextual factors, which includes impairment, personality, individual attitudes, environment, policy and culture”. Within this thesis, identity is positioned as performative and disability is defined as being a form of oppression that performatively comes into being as a result of relational material-discursive practices that are enacted within and between bodies, material objects and social spaces.

1.2.3. Defining gender

Although the term gender is entrenched in western societies, defining gender is still problematic and contentious. Judith Butler, a feminist scholar, argues that gender is not just

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a label assigned to a boy/man or to a girl/woman, she argues gender is performative. Therefore, gender is not a stable identity but is an “identity tenuously constituted in time - an identity instituted through a stylised repetition of acts” (Butler, 1988, p. 519). Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir’s work, Butler argues that the concept of gender, not to be confused with sex, is socially constructed: “when Beauvoir claims that ‘woman’ is a historical idea and not a natural fact, she clearly underscores the distinction between sex, as a biological facility, and gender, as the cultural interpretation or signification of that facility” (Butler, 1988, p. 522). Butler argues that gender does not have an essence, instead, its creation and maintenance is reified through repetitive acts over time that has ultimately become attached to an individual’s biological sex: “the various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all” (Butler, 1988, p. 522). However, one of the main criticisms of this view is that it suggests that no identities are stable because they are all performative, and instead, scholars such as Morales et al. (2015) argue that gender is the embodiment of historical and culturally specific social rules attached to men and women.

Using the theatre as a metaphor, Butler (1988) demonstrates that the repetitive acts that constitute a person’s gender is not unlike reading the play script that is re-enacted in a theatre production. Comparably, a person’s gender is not unique to the individual, although a person’s individual acts personify a particular gender identity; they are enacting behaviours that have been historically and culturally ‘written’. Similar to the theatre example given above, individuals do not have to perform the same specified acts to personify being a woman or man, for within a particular sociocultural environment there is a frame of reference that individuals can draw from (Butler, 1988). Butler (1988, p. 528) argues that despite gender being socially constructed and having no predetermined or real status it has become politicised: “In effect, gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity but serves a social policy of gender regulation and control”.

As discussed above, I challenge the normative and essentialist conceptualisation(s) of disability and gender. Gender is thus a term I use within the thesis to relate to the performative intra-actions culturally associated with being a woman or a man, but these are not reduced to the biological sex. Importantly I do not ascribe assumptions and behaviours on to bodies, instead, I recognise that knowing and being are socially embedded within relational affect economies where the “affective movement circulating within an assemblage that together establishes its capacities” (Fox and Alldred, 2017, p. 195). Within the thesis I am interested in how and what way the historical and cultural material-discursive practices

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that surround the concept of gender are reinforced, reformulated and/or rejected during intra-actions in the workplace.

1.3. Thesis theoretical framework positioning

Within the thesis I seek to enhance the social relational model of disability and gender. Whilst I agree with Thomas (1999, p. 139) that concepts of disability, impairment and gender are “linguistically and discursively created categories whose categorical boundaries have to be continually reproduced”. I disagree that this is solely bound to interpersonal interactions with other humans through “discursive practices” (Thomas, 1999, p.139), but transcends to include interactions with nonhuman material bodies and spaces through material-discursive practices. This is done by incorporating a feminist posthumanist performative lens within a feminist new materialist perspective. Like Thomas (1999) and Sang et al. (2016), within this thesis, disability and gender are defined as *forms of oppression* within a proposed sociomaterial affective model. In unpacking this proposed model, the key tenets of feminism, critical disability studies and feminist new materialism (specifically posthumanist performativity) are drawn upon.

I do not offer a bodily definition of disability, noting what a body³ cannot do, instead, in conforming with critical disability scholars, I acknowledge that bodies are situated within a sociomaterial world which affects their embodied experiences (Thomas, 1999; Garland-Thomson, 2011). I thus focus on what a body can do and what entangled factors enable/constrain (i.e. affects) bodily ability in a particular moment of space and time (see Feely, 2016). Disability and gender defined as forms of oppression within a sociomaterial affective framework, locates the embodiment of disabled women and men within an assemblage (an inseparable network) of factors including space, time, materiality and discursive practices, which are not stable but are relational and subject to constant fluctuations (Barad, 2007; Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). All these factors intra-act with one another (noting their inseparability) as an affective “force that achieves some change of state or capabilities in a relation” (Fox and Alldred, 2017, p.18).

Drawing on the proposed model of disability and gender as sociomaterially affective, there are several elements that will be considered to form the assemblages that affect oppressive practices. These include: the interaction of bodies (e.g. co-workers; managers; strangers; family/friends; politicians); biopolitics (e.g., legislation that classifies bodies, national and local government policies, access to health care); geopolitics (e.g. local

³ The reference to body expands beyond the physical and encompasses all the biomechanical, cognitive and neurodiversity elements within the human body.

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infrastructure; government investment); discursive practices (e.g. social norms on bodily ability, gender; organisational policies); and materiality (e.g. bodily reality; material spaces; technology). As an example for neurodiverse people (e.g. those with ADHD, learning disability, autism), within their own homes or organisational/learning places they may have access to spaces, people, technology and material-discursive practices that supports their needs. When out in public, an autistic person will encounter material-discursive practices, which are reinforced by dominant social norms, that do not account for their neurodiversity. For instance, people often do not consider if an individual has a high/low sensitivity to sensory information nor assume a person cannot read behavioural cues. This leads to social exclusions such as inaccessible shops/offices due to incompatible sounds and lack of understanding from other people: this is a form of oppression which restricts their access to the sociomaterial world.

A brief overview of the history of disability and work is discussed next.

1.4. The historical context of disability and employment

Whilst it is not possible to give a detailed historical overview here on the conceptualisation of disability, it is important to historically situate this research project. It is also important to consider that the concepts of disability and impairment, like gender, are historically, culturally and spatially specific which have changed over time and space (Thomas, 1999). Historians such as Goodey (2015, p. 9) stress the instability and the ever-changing boundaries in which normative identities are situated. As they explain, “concepts and characteristics change over time. Go back far enough and they change out of all recognition” (Goodey, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, what is loosely defined as disabled is affected by an assemblage of factors which differ in space, time, and matter (Barad, 2007). Disability scholars have historically conceptualised disability employment experiences within three phases: *pre-industrialisation*, *rise of capitalism/industrial revolution*, and *technological advancement* (see Oliver, 1990; Stone, 1984; Finkelstein, 1980).

1.4.1. Pre-industrialisation

Scholars such as Oliver (1990, p. 27) argue that in pre-industrial times many disabled individuals were not excluded from labour participation, and even those who could not participate fully were often “still able to make a contribution”. Oliver (1990, p. 27) further claims that although disabled individuals were seen as “individually unfortunate” they were “not segregated from the rest of society”. This claim, however, has been challenged. Borsay’s (1998) case study analysis of an infirmary in Bath, UK, for instance claims that the

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exclusion of disabled people was present before industrialisation. It is widely accepted, however, that the industrial revolution was a major factor in the reframing of organisational performativity which excluded those with bodily/cognitive/neurological impairments for their performative differences compared to able-bodied workers.

1.4.2. Industrial revolution/rise of capitalism

The rise of capitalism has been widely linked with the current conceptualisation of disability. Oliver writes (1990, p. 27-28) that changes to the location of work from rural home space to urban factory based spaces had “profound consequences”. When factory work became the means of making a living, disabled individuals underwent scrutiny (through observations) that demonstrated their difficulties and inabilities in navigating the strict and harsh work environments (Slorach, 2016, p. 77). In a capitalist society, therefore, human beings become a commodity to be controlled in order to maintain profit margins. As a result, by the early twentieth century disabled individuals in the UK were often excluded from mainstream society and placed/forced into institutions such as workhouses, asylums, special schools, or colonies (Oliver, 1990). The treatment of those with impairments became increasingly medicalised, as “medical professionals treated mentally distressed human beings as malfunctioning machines” (Solarch, 2016, p. 81), which led to the development of the medical model discussed above.

1.4.3 Technological phase

Importantly, although we have purportedly advanced to the third technological phase, capitalist ideals are still deeply embedded within organisational contexts. Solarch (2016, p. 238) argues that “as capitalism becomes more sophisticated in its productions methods... employers push workers harder to keep pace with competitors”. As discussed above, the industrial revolution led to organisational changes moving from domestic to industrial. Capitalism was created by the introduction of a standardised working environment, within institutions, which led to a change in the level of abilities considered to be the norm. These productivity norms currently persist in western societies through their ongoing re-enactment. Thus many disabled individuals continue to be excluded on the basis of their (in)ability to perform to the ongoing able-bodied norms within mainstream organisations (Foster, 2018). Thomas, in Thomas and Corker (2004, p. 19), drawing upon her social relational model of disability claimed that disability as a form of oppression is “fundamentally bound up with this society’s capitalist social relations of production and reproduction together with the cultural forms and ideological phenomena that are shaped by, and impact back upon, these economic foundations”. The enactment of neoliberal capitalism in western countries

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accentuates differences in work performance which leads to the ongoing exclusion of disabled people from the workplace. These exclusionary practices are ‘justified’ by some as a performance issue of the individual, as some disabled workers are judged as unable to perform to the same standard (so are less profitable) as their able-bodied colleagues (Charmaz, 2019). A neoliberal ideology argues that “personal failure is just that – a property of the individual”, instead of viewing it as a consequence of an increasingly unjust society (Thomas, 2016, p. 386). A new materialist ontology, however, destabilises the sociological explanation that attributes social inequalities as a ‘social force’ linked to neoliberal capitalism by reframing the analysis within a relational assemblage (Fox and Alldred, 2017). This relational assemblage can “be seen as a slow drip of a repeated, routinized and habituated pattern of interactions” (Barad, 2001: 94-96), memories, experiences and outcomes that aggregate subsequent aspects of life within an assemblage that mediates a market-orientated affect economy” (Fox and Alldred, 2017, p. 62).

1.5. Current socio-political context

This section discusses the current socio-political context within which this project is situated. This knowledge is of paramount importance to this thesis as it directly impacts the embodied experiences of the research participants. The following areas are discussed: disability employment statistics, legislation and government policies, austerity measures, and employment support.

1.5.1. Disability employment statistics

In the UK the Family Resources Survey estimates that in the financial year of 2017/2018 there were 13.3 million disabled individuals, 7.3 million were women (55%) and 6 million were men (45%) (DWP, 2019a). Of these 13.3 million disabled individuals in the UK 7.5 million are of working-age (16-64 years old). Official government statistics put the number of working-age disabled individuals (both women and men) in employment at 3.9 million (51.3% employment rate) (DWP, 2019a). Of the 3.9 million disabled individuals in employment 2.2 million are women and 1.7 million are men (Powell, 2019). As shown in Table 1.1 below, despite legislative protection for disabled individuals, such as the Equality Act 2010, there remained a disheartening 30.4% gap in the employment rates between disabled individuals (51.3%) and non-disabled individuals (81.4%) for the reporting year 2018 (Powell, 2019). Specific to gender, government statistics show that disabled women are experiencing a sharper rise in employment rates from 2013 (41.9%) to 2017 (50.8%), a 9% rise; compared with employment rates for disabled men from 2013 (45.1%) to 2017 (51.9%), a 6.6% rise (Powell, 2019).

Table 1.1: Employment rates and gaps for disabled and non-disabled individuals in the UK (Source: adapted from Powell, 2019)

	Disabled employment rate (%)	Non-disabled employment rate (%)	Employment gap (%)
All	51.30	81.40	30.40
Women	50.80	76.60	25.70
Men	51.90	86	34.10

Interestingly, as shown above in Table 1.1, disabled men have a higher employment rate (51.9%) compared with disabled women (50.8%). However, disabled men experience a higher employment gap (the difference between disabled and non-disabled employment rates) compared with non-disabled men (34.1%). This is in contrast to the employment gap between disabled women and non-disabled women (25.7%). This suggests that disabled men are experiencing more barriers than disabled women, but the statistics do not explain why. Although the overall percentage of employment is similar for disabled women and men in the UK, when investigating full-time and part-time employment disabled men are more likely to be in full-time employment (44%) than their female counterparts (28%) (DWP 2019a). In contrast disabled women are more likely to work part-time (24%) than disabled men (8%) – these figures are, however, not too dissimilar to non-disabled women and men part-time employment rates (27% versus 7%) (DWP 2019a). However, one of the main criticisms of these statistics is the failure to look at different types of disability or impairments, the type of employment, and how different types of disabilities or impairment are represented in the workplace. This has been partly addressed in recent years as can be seen in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Employment rates for different types of disabilities (Source: adapted from DWP and Department for Health, 2016)

Disability type	Disabled employment rate (%)
Severe disfigurements, skin conditions, allergies	66.5
Difficulty in hearing	60.3
Stomach, liver kidney or digestive problems	59
Difficulty in seeing	57.5
Problems or disabilities connected with arms or hands	56.4
Problems or disabilities connected with legs or feet	53.9
Problems or disabilities connected with back or neck	53.8
Chest or breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis	53.2
Diabetes	52.2
Other health problems or disabilities	51.6
Heart, blood pressure or blood circulation problems	45.3
Depression, bad nerves or anxiety	42
Progressive illness not included elsewhere (e.g. Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy)	37.5
Epilepsy	31.6
Mental illness, or suffer from phobia, panics or other nervous disorders	25.3
Severe or specific learning difficulties (mental handicap)	23.9

As shown above, those with different types of disabilities experience different levels of exclusion, with the disabilities socially seen to be severe (e.g. learning difficulties) experiencing the most exclusion to the labour market. Although employment rates are similar for disabled women and men (c.50%), research has revealed that disabled women have greater difficulties in gaining and maintaining employment than disabled men. In contrast to the figures presented above, *global* employment rates are significantly lower for disabled women (19.6%) than they are for disabled men (52.9%) (World Health Organisation and The World Bank, 2011).

When additional identity intersections are considered, disabled women who are single mothers experience a lower rate of employment (30%) compared with disabled

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women with no children (Work and Disability, 2015). Looking specifically at pay, white disabled women earn less than able-bodied white women. Similarly, disabled women also earn less than white disabled men (Woodhams et al., 2015b). Woodhams et al., (2015b) found a £1766 difference in pay between white disabled women and white disabled men (aged 31-45), in favour of the men. When comparing up to four intersecting identity categories (women, ethnic minority, disabled and 46 years or older) there was a mean pay difference of £8219 compared with white middle-aged able-bodied men. Woodhams et al. (2015b, p. 73) conclude that “for individuals with more than a single disadvantage, there is an intersectional [oppressive] effect on their pay. Like a snowball, it gathers weight exponentially as it descends”. While this demonstrates the oppressive economic impact of intersecting disability and gender identities in employment, more qualitative research is needed to further understand the sociocultural impact of work experiences for disabled individuals. More research is needed that widens the scope of analysis by considering multiple factors (micro, macro, and meso) that impact an individual’s experiences of oppression within the workplace (Atewologun, 2014). To address this, the theoretical framework chosen for this project, specifically feminist posthumanist performativity, critically interrogates how socioeconomic/cultural/material practices continue to performatively enact disability and gender as forms of oppression which sustain sociomaterial inequalities (see Braidotti, 2019).

1.5.2. Legislation and Government policies

Although disabled individuals in the UK are protected by legislation (e.g. Equality Act, 2010), international conventions (e.g. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPWD]), and policies (e.g. disability confidence scheme: DWP, 2018a), there are still structural and cultural barriers that prevent disabled women and men from successfully entering the workplace (Williams et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2014). These barriers, such as inaccessible workplaces or negative attitudes, are explored in greater detail in Chapter 2. Legislative protection has, however, had a limited impact as disabled individuals and women continue to endure discrimination as a result of their socially constructed and binary social identities (Hall and Wilton, 2011).

Specific to the UK, the United Nations (CRPWD; 2016) investigated the UK's uptake and implementation of article 19, 27 and 28 of the CRPWD which the UK joined in 2010. They found that “there is reliable evidence that the threshold of grave or systematic violations of the rights of persons with disabilities has been met in the State party” (United Nations CRPWD, 2016, p. 20). The UK Government not only categorically rejected the

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entire findings of the committee, but they also refused to implement any of the recommendations (The UK Government Response to the Report by the UN committee, 2016). This response has been criticised by disability organisations within the UK (Disabled People against Cuts [DPAC] and Inclusion London, 2017). These findings present an unfavourable image of the political context that impacts disabled individuals and others who have a socially defined minority identity. The experiences of disabled individuals have been made increasingly difficult by additional factors (e.g. austerity measures, discrimination, and employment support). These factors can impact a person's decision on whether to disclose their disability and how organisations engage with disabled employees. These elements are discussed in the sections below.

1.5.3. Austerity measures

Government policies have a major impact on the services and support available to the public. The financial crash of 2007/8 has had far-reaching global consequences resulting in the introduction of financial regulations and austerity measures as countries attempted to reduce their overall fiscal deficit. In the UK, the austerity measures introduced included freezing public sector pay above £21,000; spending cuts across all government departments and local council funding; cuts and significant reformations to the welfare system; and job losses in the public sector (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012). Taking into consideration the current political climate is important for this thesis as the impact of austerity measures and government welfare benefit changes have had extensive effects on the experience of both individuals and organisations. As a result of austerity measures, and their impact on public spending habits, many organisations have also been forced to adopt cost-cutting measures which have reduced the number of jobs available, and thus competition is rife for all applicants. These cutbacks, coupled with the reduction in support services available to disabled individuals, means that the process of finding employment is made even harder (Goodley, 2014). Goodley (2014, p. 10) argues that because of austerity measures:

disabled people are caught in a catch-22: either to show that they are really disabled (so welfare dependent) or emphasise their readiness for work (where their benefits are reduced as they try to access an ever more competitive, aggressive, flexible, low-paying and as we shall see ableist labour market).

In recent years the elected UK's Governments have used austerity measures to reform welfare programmes across the country (Roulstone, 2015). These reforms have restricted and cut disability support services at both central and local government levels. These changes have had a massive impact on disabled individuals' economic, social, and

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psychological well-being (Cross, 2013; Goodley, 2014). Cross (2013, p. 722) illustrates that “many of us are scared to be seen managing to get about, as if this is somehow a criminal activity proving we were cheats all along”. Under the reforms, the old disability benefits system of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) has been changed over to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and the Incapacity benefit has changed to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Individuals can have one or both of these benefits. Recent government changes to merge multiple welfare benefits into one called universal credit (Gov.uk, 2019) is only partially implemented and has been met by fierce criticism from the public, activists, and politicians lobbying on their constituent’s behalf (Butler, 2018). This is as the changes to the new benefits system and procedures has left many people struggling for money and/or falling into debt.

Changes to benefits, such as ESA, has resulted in many individuals having to go to greater lengths to find *any* work, in order to qualify for benefits. This work is often low paid with little to no stability and/or a zero-hours contract (Thomas, 2016) and puts individuals at an economic and psychological disadvantage (Bates et al., 2017). Furthermore, individuals are forced to find and experience temporary and under-employment (i.e. below their skill-set and/or economic needs). It can be argued that the changes identified above, and below, are a direct consequence of neoliberal practices that predominantly drive the political culture of western countries. A consequence of recent welfare changes is that the criteria to qualify for benefits has been tightened to reduce the number of applicants eligible for the top bands of support (Grover and Piggott, 2013). Many people are receiving less financial support through welfare even though their disability remains the same (Grover and Piggott, 2013). Furthermore, many have lost their access to life-changing equipment, such as the use of a disability car, which has affected their ability to commute to work (Cross, 2013). Eligibility changes, from DLA to PIP, halved the number of those who were previously eligible for a mobility car. The changes have been widely criticised and challenged with 65% of appeals being successful in 2017 (*itv News*, 2017). This disruption affected the ability of many disabled individuals to commute to work with some reporting that the experience of losing their car made them suicidal (*BBC News*, 2017).

Psychologically these benefit changes have had a major impact as people who were awarded DLA for ‘life’ believed that they would not need to undergo any further assessment. However, with the benefit change to PIP, everyone had to be reassessed and some were moved down an award boundary from high (enhanced rates) to low (standard rate) even though their disability remained unchanged (DWP, 2013/2017, p. 16). Although many

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people lost some or all of their benefits as a result of the changes to the benefits system, they have, in the majority of cases, won their appeals when they took their case to a benefits tribunal (United Nations CRPWD, 2016, paragraph 102, p. 18; Harrington, 2010). The effects of changes are increasingly becoming strained with the implementation of universal credit which brings further insecurity. This demonstrates the inefficient methodology approach of recent governments that favour a medical over a social model of disability.

1.5.4. Employment support

The UK Government's current position on disability and employment is that disabled people are now largely responsible for finding employment on their own, although they can receive financial bursaries to help with the transition into employment (DWP, 2014; DWP, 2013; Wehman, 2012). When disabled individuals seek employment they can receive support from their future employers, government and charitable organisations. In the UK, charities such as the Shaw Trust (2018) and Remploy (2019a) help and support individuals to develop skills and find appropriate jobs to apply for. Shaw Trust is one of the main charities that contract and audit other charities, or organisations, that implement the government's Work Choice programme⁴ across the country. As is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, the level of support provided by an organisation depends on whether a disability is disclosed prior to an interview, or if they declare a non-visible disability once employment has been secured.

To further complicate the experiences of disabled applicants, recent austerity measures have reduced the overall support available which has affected those who need employment support the most. As Bates et al. (2017, p. 172) discuss:

We know that when people with learning disabilities are supported well, they can access workplaces and contribute in significant ways. Yet, too often, support is inconsistent. The availability of supported internships, supporting employment methods and access to job coaches is patchy across the country to the extent that a postcode lottery persists.

This 'postcode lottery' presents a challenge to researchers who are attempting to explore the experiences of disabled individuals in the UK. I am therefore mindful of the differences in support that individuals can receive and where possible any potential differences are highlighted throughout the thesis. Individuals who do manage to secure support, however, can still experience difficulties, such as attitudinal barriers, when attempting to enter and sustain

⁴ A government endorsed supported employment programme to develop the skills needed to find mainstream employment.

employment (Baumberg, 2015; Roulstone and Williams, 2014). This is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Further to this, research in the UK has identified that changes in the way that human resources (HR) and occupational health professionals are interacting with employees (moving to a more virtual presence) are putting disabled workers into a precarious position (Foster and Scott, 2015). This is exacerbated as recommendations and organisational policies are seen to be advisory rather than mandatory.

1.6. Research questions

In problematising the normative discourses that surround disabled women and men in society and organisations, this study seeks to explore how oppressive practices are reinforced or disrupted during intra-actions between bodies, material object and sociomaterial spaces. By drawing on feminist posthumanist performativity I consider the wider factors that coalesce around individuals and the spaces they traverse. This thesis therefore has the following aims:

- To critically review the literature which explores the employment experiences of disabled women and men;
- To investigate how feminist posthumanist performativity can be applied to better understand the experiences of disabled women and men in the context of work organisations;
- To problematise the normative discourses that surround the concepts of disability and gender which constrains societal participation;
- To explore how the material-discursive practices enacted in employment spaces enable or constrain the embodied experiences of disabled women and men;
- To question the normative policies that pervade organisations and continue to exclude those who do not fit the historical and cultural able-bodied and masculine norms.

To address the empirical and theoretical gaps (informed by Chapters 2 and 3) this thesis addresses the following research questions:

1. How do the material-discursive practices that pervade organisational sociomaterial spaces affect disabled women and men working in supported and mainstream workplaces?
2. How and in what way does the performative enactment of gender affect the experiences of disability in the workplace?

3. How are oppressive material-discursive practices enacted within organisations resisted or disrupted by disabled women and men?

1.7. Structure of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 presents the literature review on the experiences of recruitment practices, maintaining employment, promotion, and leaving employment for disabled individuals, women and men. The review also explores how dominant social norms attached to identity concepts affect the identities and experiences of disabled women and men. The review concludes by identifying the gaps in the literature and highlighting what additional research is needed to address this.

Chapter 3 focuses on the theoretical frameworks that inform the thesis. The chapter explores the tenets of feminist new materialism and feminist posthumanist performativity, specifically how they critically explore the ethical consequences of essentialist and binary identity constructions. Feminist new materialism and feminist posthumanist performativity are discussed as analytic tools to consider the wider relational factors that affect knowing and being.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology. The thesis's ontological and epistemological position is outlined before moving on to discuss the methods used to collect and analyse the data. The characteristics of the sheltered workshop where the data collection occurred are discussed and the demographic information of the research participants for the interview study is given before moving on to discuss the ethics of the project. Additionally, the rationale and the procedure of the chosen thematic analysis and the resultant themes are outlined.

Chapter 5 discusses the five themes identified in the analysis that relate to the research questions. The five themes discussed are inclusion, exclusion and discrimination; cognitive and physical barriers to workplace participation; practical and work-based support; performative enactment of difference; and resisting and disrupting oppressive practices .

Chapter 6 brings the thesis to its conclusion with a discussion of the contributions of the thesis and how the findings support or contradict previous research. The chapter further considers the implications of the project on theory, practice and policy; the limitations of the project; and future directions for research. Finally, the chapter presents a short overall summary of the thesis as a whole.

Chapter 2: A review of the literature on gender, disability and employment

This chapter presents a review of current literature on disabled women and men in employment. Multiple strands of literature from different academic fields that have direct relevance to the research questions are critically drawn upon throughout. The largest part of the review is devoted to exploring the employment context and experiences of disabled women and men during recruitment, maintaining employment, promotions and career changes, and accessing alternative types of employment. The chapter then moves on to discuss how concepts of identity affect an individual's well-being and their experience of employment. Finally, the review contextualises the sociocultural and psychological factors that surround disabled women and men. The chapter concludes by reflecting on how the critical review was undertaken, showing how it relates the research questions by identifying gaps in the existing research.

2.1. Getting into employment

Research which explores disability and gender primarily reports the negative experiences, particularly sexism and ableism, which fails to provide a holistic view of the everyday experiences in the workplace (Harvey, 2018). Nevertheless, it is important to analyse these studies as they provide contextual information that is relevant to the experiences of disabled women and men. The subsequent sections first explore the experiences of discrimination for disabled women and men and then the experiences of disclosing a disability when seeking work.

2.1.1. Experiences of discrimination

Many individuals that are aware, or have the first-hand experience, of inequality find applying for a job daunting. Organisational research has found that women can face discrimination when applying for and maintaining employment due the ongoing reproduction of historical and oppressive practices associated with their gender (Reilly et al., 2017; Glick and Fiske, 2011). Women who experience 'benevolent' sexism are subject to paternalistic behaviour where they are viewed as being weak, inferior and needing to be cared for (Good and Rudman, 2010). This is more prevalent in male-dominated industries (e.g. science, technology, engineering, mathematics, banking or construction) (Reilly et al., 2017; Powell and Sang, 2015; Bobbit-Zeher, 2011). Hostile sexism involves women being depicted as inferior, inadequate and/or objectified (Reilly et al., 2017). This results in rejected applications and unsuccessful interviews if a woman's credibility and performance

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are met with heavy scepticism (Streets and Major, 2014). Gender discrimination has also been reported to be affected by power differences. For example, men with a lower power status rate high powered women's resumés critically, such as doubting their qualifications and offering lower pay, compared with high powered men's resumés for a managerial position. This was not found for men with high power status reviewing the same resumés (Hoover et al., 2019). Hoover et al., (2019) conclude this discrimination was in response to a threat to their historically dominant masculine identity posed by agentic women. This study indicates that identity and power are entangled with embedded social norms to affect employment hiring practices as women are seen as less 'capable' than men (Braidotti, 2016). However, more research is needed to explore how these oppressive organisational practices affect the day-to-day intra-actions once employment is secured for disabled women and men. As discussed in Chapter 1, gender norms are heavily ingrained in western society and although changes are being made to overcome gender inequality, both horizontal and vertical gender segregation remains an issue. As is discussed below, sexism and ableism also intersect to impact disabled women's experiences.

For women especially, although by no means just women, their personal image (i.e. their material bodily features), such as attire, make-up, weight, and physical attractiveness, impact job prospects and recruitment processes (Tazzyman, 2020; Witz et al., 2003). Howlett et al.'s (2015) UK-based experimental research involved asking women in higher education or employment to rate women's employment competency based on pictures of women wearing varying clothing, ranging from provocative to conservative. The study found that even "minor clothing changes have a measurable impact on perceptions, to the detriment of women in high status roles" (Howlett et al., 2015, p. 114). This demonstrates how material objects contribute to the performative enactment of gender through practices of oppression during intra-actions between bodies, material objects and workplaces. Women and men are often discriminated against entrenched gendered social norms that are attached to material objects (e.g. which clothes are seen to be appropriate for women). Similarly, when applying for jobs, physical appearance has more of an impact on individuals who have a visible physical disability (Vedeler, 2014). Achterberg et al.'s (2009) systematic review sought to identify factors (e.g. gender, education level, age, disability type, mental health scores) that were found to affect work participation. Their review claimed that young disabled men are more likely to successfully enter the workplace than young disabled women. Furthermore, Achterberg et al. (2009) found that education level and psychosocial level of functioning (e.g. the combined influence of the social environment and psychological factors) compounded their ability to secure employment. This illustrates how

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intersecting identities and dominant social norms reduce the likelihood of young disabled women from entering employment.

Specific to disability, *disablism* has been used by some scholars to describe disability discrimination (e.g. Madriaga, 2007). However, Harpur (2014, 2012) has critiqued the word by challenging the binary impact of the word *disablism*. Harpur (2014, 2012) argues that *ableism* - when a “person experiences unfavourable treatment because they have different abilities” (Harpur, 2014, pp. 1234-1235) - is a preferred word that does not reify binary distinctions. Campbell (2009, p. 5), however, offers a more thought-provoking definition of ableism as:

a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human.

Ableism is a concept widely used in disability studies to highlight the social injustice that occurs for disabled people, as normative discourses within society exclude difference. It has been argued that:

Ableism’s psychological, social, economic, cultural character normatively privileges able-bodiedness; promotes smooth forms of personhood and smooth health; creates space fit for normative citizens; encourages institutional bias; and lends support to economic and material dependence on neoliberal and hyper-capitalist forms of production.

(Goodley, 2014, p. 21)

Intersecting identities such as disability and gender (which also intersect with age, ethnicity, social class, religion and sexuality) can result in experiences of oppression and exclusion as these individuals are seen as less capable than their male able-bodied counterparts due to historical and cultural social norms.

Discrimination is often the result of a lack of knowledge of the particular impairment that applicants have. This leads to oppressive practices such as the rejection of job applicants without the assessment the applicants’ qualifications or abilities (Lindsay et al., 2019, 2014). Shier et al. (2009) also report that discrimination occurs when employers fear potential health and safety issues, and/or lack organisational infrastructure to support certain conditions. Doubting an applicant’s abilities due to their impairment was frequently found

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in a systematic review paper which explored employment experiences for individuals with mental health conditions (Brohan et al., 2012). A lack of awareness of an impairment can have negative consequences for both the employee and the employer. For example, acting in breach of legislation can result in legal proceedings for the employers (Darcy et al., 2016). Fear of doing or saying the wrong thing is common among employers (Hernandez et al., 2008) and this may be the result of a lack of knowledge about certain conditions. As reported by Hernandez et al. (2008), employers prefer to recruit disabled individuals from supported employment programmes/agencies. This preference was influenced by the continued access to support from the sheltered organisation to ease the disabled employee's transition to a new work environment. However, they indicate that this communication/relationship with the agency should be ongoing for continued success. The aforementioned studies have identified that able-bodied norms have pervaded employment discourses and has resulted in the exclusion of others on the basis of their perceived difference to dominant norms. This can impact one's decision to disclose a disability to employers, perpetuating a cycle of inequality. As discussed next, disclosing a disability can have a negative or positive impact during a job interview.

2.1.2. Disclosure

An individual can have an invisible, visible or comorbidity including both types of impairments. Individuals have a choice of whether to disclose their invisible impairment to a potential employer (Frndak et al., 2015; Santuzzi et al., 2014; von Schrader et al., 2014; Jans et al., 2012; Irvine, 2011). Research has shown that some individuals with invisible impairments fear that disclosing their disability will result in stereotypical assumptions about their (in)ability to fulfil a job role (Shier et al., 2009). This has been repeatedly found in research. Ameri et al.'s (2018) experimental research in America has identified that for disabilities declared on job applications the applications received on average 26% less interest from employers than the identical applications with no disability disclosed. Furthermore, Ameri et al. (2018, p. 359) conclude that:

the pattern of results points to employer bias in hiring as an important piece of the disability employment puzzle and helps to explain the low employment rate of people with disabilities. In particular, our similar findings for applicants with two distinct types of disabilities support the idea that bias—and not the productivity or accommodation concerns that differ by disability type—accounts for lower employer interest in applicants with disabilities.

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In contrast to the risks of disclosure, there is evidence that disclosure is advantageous when employers make the required changes to support the individual (Jans et al., 2012). Ameri et al. (2018), however, found that small organisations not covered by the American's with Disability Act (1990) were more likely to reject applications where a disability was disclosed. This has been linked to a lack of awareness of state laws and the absence of an HR department within the organisation. Importantly, the way in which an organisation responds to gender, disability, race, and sexuality (and others) demonstrates the level of preparedness for dealing with diverse people (Boehm and Dwertmann, 2014; Yang and Konrad, 2011; Moore et al., 2010; Shier et al., 2009).

Jans et al.'s (2012) study explored the strategies for disclosure which found that disclosure is more likely when individuals had a visual impairment, or when accommodations are needed for invisible impairments. Those with invisible impairments often chose not to disclose their disability for fear that it would harm their career. Overall Jans et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of presenting a disability in a positive manner, namely highlighting their capability to prospective employers, but recognise that "each person and each situation is unique" (p. 163). Comparatively, Vedeler's (2014) study on visible physical disabilities found that potential employers with no prior awareness of an applicant's disability resulted in an unfavourable interview experience. For example, interviewers appeared visibly shocked and/or presented a negative facial expression when meeting the disabled applicants. These findings support previous research that non-disclosure of a visible disability can result in unsuccessful interviews when potential employers feel duped and put on the spot (Shier et al., 2009). This demonstrates the destructiveness of stereotypical knowledge that is often incorrect, namely assumptions that disabled applicants are unsuitable regardless of their qualifications and actual abilities (Lindsay et al., 2019, 2014). However, these studies are mainly from mainstream organisations. More research is needed to assess how experiences of disclosure differ across different types of employment.

Negative recruitment experiences result in a vicious circle whereby applicants conceal their disability when applying for future jobs as they believe that this will prevent their applications being rejected (Vedeler, 2014). Vedeler's findings, however, are based on a sample of physically disabled people and is therefore not representative of invisible disabilities, such as mental health conditions. Nonetheless, the study highlights a multitude of scenarios (no interest, interviews not being scheduled, unsuccessful interviews) that disabled individuals may experience during the recruitment process. The studies reviewed

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above demonstrate the consequences of employers' often inaccurate and skewed perceptions and illustrate why disabled applicants struggle to navigate the recruitment process, resulting in prolonged unemployment (Burke et al., 2013). Unemployment can have potentially long-term damaging effects such as mental health issues and poverty. Furthermore, the lack of work experience among disabled applicants will affect the probability of gaining employment in the future (Lindsay et al., 2014).

Additional research has identified how disclosing and acknowledging a physical disability in a positive way, for instance claiming a disability is an attribute, during an interview can prevent stereotypical identity formulations (Lyons et al., 2018; Jans et al., 2012). The findings thus reveal the need for a much broader and in-depth qualitative study which explores the factors that contribute to the oppression of disabled women and men in the workplace. Also, how these factors intra-act to affect the day-to-day personal experiences of employment for disabled women and men (Williams and Fredrick, 2015). Research suggests that the positive experiences of disclosing a disability related to the employer's experience, personally or professionally, with disability (Vedeler, 2014; Kimm and Brodwin, 2005). In the majority of cases studies have found employers base their judgement on an applicant's minority social identity, which reifies binary discourses when employers overlook disabled individual's credentials. The next part of the chapter moves on to review the literature on maintaining employment.

2.2. Maintaining employment

On securing employment, barriers remain for disabled women and men. The barriers experienced depend on whether an individual's disability is visible or invisible (Synder et al., 2010). Employees can face discrimination and/or prejudice for multiple reasons, implicitly or explicitly, related to their identity. For example, implicit discrimination can occur when a person's disability or gender is not considered when planning events such as disability building access and time of meetings. This section of the review explores transitions into employment, temporary and under-employment, and support.

2.2.1. Transitions into employment

The transition into employment often consists of learning the details of the role, understanding organisational processes and practices, and establishing rapport with others. Although applicable to anyone, this period is of greater significance to those with an impairment as they may have to work a little longer (or in a different way) and/or activities may require greater effort in comparison to their non-disabled colleagues. Val Critten's

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(2016) case study on a young man with cerebral palsy (Nick) reveals that, for those who are making the transition between education and employment, expectations often do not match reality. Although Nick's employer complied by making all the required legal physical accommodations, both parties were overly confident in their expectations. Critten (2016, p. 3-4) concludes that in "Nick's case, changing the lengths of his shifts, and ensuring he had a supervisor or other employee nearby in case of difficulties, might have made all the difference to his continuing with his employment". Despite working in a health care sector, the institution's practices appear to have developed around able-bodied and productivity-driven norms which, in this instance, resulted in an unsupportive or oppressive environment. The above suggests that the way in which mainstream employment is structured excludes those with different physical and cognitive abilities; the work systems are designed for able-bodied individuals. It is at this point, due to the rigid work systems, that individual's such as Nick are forced to find alternative employment. This includes sheltered employment or volunteering for organisations, which provide a more inclusive and adaptive work environment, or face unemployment. This exclusion to mainstream employment through able-bodied norms is evidenced in Simonsen and Neubert's (2012) study. Their research shows how American youths with intellectual or developmental disabilities transitioning from school to work were more likely to be in sheltered or nonwork arrangements (57.1%), compared with mainstream employment (14.2%), or other community work (28.7%).

Once employment has been secured the process of negotiating accommodations can be a complicated and frustrating experience. A number of issues have been reported such as not being provided with supportive equipment (e.g. speech-to-text software), or that the accommodation(s) needed and/or requested are denied or resisted by employers (e.g. designated parking) (Kordovski et al., 2015). There is often a lack of understanding or awareness from both the employer and employee in accessing accommodations that are needed to perform the job role (Foster and Wass, 2012). Where accommodations are made "these more often than not leave underlying ableist organizing principles untouched, adapting work from an able-bodied ideal, so that variations to a job are viewed as inferior, or concessions to an 'ideal' norm" (Foster, 2018, p. 193).

Many disabled individuals feel bullied at work (Fevre et al., 2013) and are under pressure to perform their job role at an unsustainable level due to employers' lack of understanding (Baumberg, 2015; Roulstone and Williams, 2014). Further to this, research has shown that many disabled employees feel they need to work beyond their ability to prove their worth (Brewster et al., 2017). Women, and disabled women, also face further issues

(Streets and Major, 2014) as they generally experience tougher realities in balancing work and family commitments (Jyrkinen and McKie, 2012; Anderson et al., 2010). Disabled women also struggle to gain promotion in male-dominated fields (Cook and Glass, 2014; Sealy, 2010). Similarly, pregnant women can face discrimination and prejudice when requesting maternity leave, and again on returning to work: pregnant women and mothers experience a conflict between “their lives and ideal worker images with masculine performance evaluation systems” (Buzzanell and Liu, 2005, p. 12). For disabled parents this process becomes even more precarious as they have to manage their disability, family commitments, and adhere to organisational performance expectations (Pini and Conway, 2017). All these findings demonstrate the difficulties disabled women and men face to secure, maintain and progress in employment; very rarely is the transition process seamless.

For many disabled individuals overcoming the hurdles of securing employment is met with a new set of challenges. Arranging accommodations and gaining access to a supportive environment is often fraught with difficulties and can result in frustration from all parties involved. However, having accommodations within the workplace does not guarantee a satisfactory and fulfilling employment experience (e.g. Critten, 2016). For those making the transition from education to employment, or returning to work after acquiring a disability, there is an adjustment phase. Expectations are offset by the realities of performing a job role to the employer’s expectations and managing symptoms such as fatigue or pain. The next section explores different forms of employment, specifically temporary and under-employment.

2.2.2. Temporary employment and under-employment

Not everyone who secures employment obtains a permanent full-time contract. Some individuals are hired on a short and/or fixed-term contract, and thus endure economic insecurities. Further to this, individuals may be employed in jobs that underutilise their skills and education (under-employment), which can reduce levels of life satisfaction (Konrad et al., 2013). A temporary or fixed-term contract can result in ongoing scrutiny of job performance, fewer training opportunities, lower wages, and lower job satisfaction (Konrad et al., 2013; Booth et al., 2002). Importantly, a permanent contract at the end of the temporary/probation contract is not guaranteed, making the employment journey uncertain (Booth et al., 2002). One of the reasons why temporary employment and under-employment is highlighted within this review is to demonstrate the precariousness of gaining suitable employment for disabled women and men. Konrad et al. (2013, p. 378) stress that “employment status should not be dichotomized as working versus unemployed, but rather

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that poorer-quality jobs generate significantly fewer positive outcomes for workers with disabilities than high-quality jobs do”. Importantly, there are numerous factors that have affected temporary work experiences over the past decade. These include, austerity measures introduced almost globally (Hayes, 2017); interactions of neoliberal policies, capitalist market priorities, and the shrinking of the welfare state (Lazzarato, 2009; Hartman, 2005); and persistent negative discourses surrounding disability, gender and unemployment (McDowell, 2014).

Research shows that disabled employees are more likely to be in temporary employment or under-employment than their able-bodied peers (Kaye, 2009). Further to this, younger (18-35) highly educated disabled women were found more likely to experience temporary employment compared with their older and male peers (Ervasti et al., 2014; Virtanen et al., 2006). Moreover, disabled employees experience more discrimination and difficulties negotiating accommodations in temporary employment than in permanent employment (Konrad et al., 2013). Interestingly, temporary workers are less likely to take sick leave than permanent colleagues due to the fear of losing their job and the instability of temporary contracts (Virtanen et al., 2006). Although it should be stressed that the data from Virtanen et al.’s study is based on old data from Finland in 1996 and does not reflect the current political and economic climate. The data does however demonstrate how women, within the study, were more likely to experience job termination for taking sick leave during a temporary contract than men. This places disabled employees, specifically disabled women with episodic conditions that may flare up at any time, at a distinct disadvantage to disabled men as they experience more oppressive practices in temporary work environments. To add to this, research has found that some disabled women would rely on welfare “rather than risk taking a low-paying job they may not be able to keep because of fluctuations in disability” (Vick and Lightman, 2010, p. 74). Nevertheless, prioritising health before employment took an emotional toll on the women, as they felt inadequate when having to explain their employment history gaps due to ill-health (Vick and Lightman, 2010).

The UK’s Government programmes, such as the Work Choice programme⁵, offer temporary supported employment in organisations chosen to run the programme (with guidance and procedures given by the government). These organisations are, however, encouraged to transition users on to mainstream or unsupported employment after a specified period. There are two strands of the Work Choice programme (DWP, 2017a). First, Work

⁵ The Work Choice programme no longer accepts new applications but at the time of this research in 2016 it was still fully active.

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Entry Support where individuals are given guidance on personal and work skills for up to six months to help them to obtain a job. This can be extended by three or six months if a job prospect is clear at the end of this time. Second, In-Work Support provides help and support for disabled applicants to start employment and to stay in this job. This support lasts on average twelve months but can also be extended (in 'exceptional' cases) for up to two years (DWP, 2017a, p. 2). An issue with programmes like Work Choice is that employees may be content with their current placement and do not want to move on. Previously, staying in supported employment was not a possibility, however recent changes by the DWP (2017a, p. 16) state that "[a]fter two years in supported employment participants can stay in this job and receive lighter-touch in work". Lighter-touch means clients receive less support from the programme. Although temporary work can negatively affect workers, it has been found to improve the economic and psychological well-being of disabled individuals in the short-term compared with unemployment (Konrad et al., 2013). This improvement is however less than is seen in those employed in permanent full-time positions (Konrad et al., 2013). The next section explores support mechanisms whilst maintaining employment.

2.2.3. Support whilst maintaining employment

Before or once employment has been secured, disabled people can apply for support, such as the government scheme Access to Work:

There are two main types of Access to Work provision: 'Assessments' and 'Elements'. Assessments involve exploring workplace-related barriers to employment and making recommendations on how these can be overcome. Elements are intended to supplement the reasonable adjustments that employers are required to make under the Equality Act 2010.

(DWP, 2018b, p. 1)

However, Sayce (2011) argued this is the "Government's best-kept secret" (p. 14). A press release from April 2016 demonstrates how underutilised this programme is: "the government's specialist disabled employment programme, Access to Work, has supported 132,740 people since launching in 2007" (DWP, 2016b). If considering only those in employment in 2016, then Access to Work has been utilised by only 3.79% of those in employment. Recent figures from 2017/2018 put the number of approved Access to Work provisions at 27,730 (DWP, 2018b). However, despite the available schemes, in recent years there have been significant and continuous reductions in benefits, and overall the support

systems available are limited (Graby and Homayoun, 2019, Saffer et al., 2018; Harwood, 2014; HM Treasury and UK National Statistics, 2013; Cross, 2013; Lymbery, 2012).

Not all forms of support are financial. Support from co-workers, employers, and organisations more broadly is also vital for a positive work environment and affects the decision on whether to remain or leave work (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017). Both physical and moral support is needed for an ideal work environment for all employees, but especially for disabled people. Ingrained capitalist norms, however, results in a conflict of interest between the needs of the individual and the needs of the organisation (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015). For instance, organisations are wary of costly accommodations and changes to the work environment or job roles that may result in financial hardship or resistance from other employees (Burke et al., 2013). Foster and Wass (2012, p. 717) concluded that “[t]he test of ‘reasonableness’ in law is an objective one which ultimately can only be decided by an ET [employment tribunal]. If employers, employees, their representatives and the judiciary hold different interpretations of what is ‘reasonable’, conflict is inevitable”. Employers and organisations need to recognise disabled individuals’ capacity to contribute to organisational goals, thus moving away from ableist and masculine practices that exclude those historically labelled as ‘inferior’.

2.3. Organisational progression or changing job roles

Gender discrimination and ableism are a prevalent issue in the workplace, as white middle-class men still dominate the top positions in organisations regardless of women’s advancements in recent years (Atewologun et al., 2016; Sealy and Vinnicombe, 2013). This is more prevalent in professional jobs, where the percentage of disabled women is very low (Brewster et al., 2017). Specific to disability, Brewster et al. (2017, p. 1037-8) found that there are a number of barriers in place that prevent disabled women from progressing and/or maintaining leadership positions:

These barriers included a lack of appropriate support strategies; lack of confidence; the demanding nature of the role and its impact on their health and work-life balance; lack of awareness among managers and colleagues and inadequate uptake of equality and diversity training; a lack of positive role models; a lack of investment by the university in supporting staff through professional development activities; and the nature of their additional needs.

These barriers are numerous and demonstrate the complex entanglement of multiple attitudinal and institutional behaviours that prevent career progression. Brewster et al. (2017)

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recommend a number of moral supports to combat these barriers, such as mentors and equality and diversity training for staff. They also discuss the fragility of the material body, for instance, fatigue, and how this affects the decision to apply for a leadership role as the disabled participants were not able to perform to the extreme able-bodied expectations. This provides an example of how dominant norms, such as masculine and able-bodied performative expectations, exclude those with impairments and family commitments from full work participation and progression.

When exploring gender and employment, scholars have identified that particular dominant gender work cultures can be difficult for women, who work in organisations dominated by a patriarchal system, to break into (Knights, 2015). For example, Priola and Brannan's (2009) qualitative research found that career progression for women in management roles was hampered by the instilled masculine culture of their organisations. Although aware of the inequality and the barriers to career progression they only resisted by withdrawing, such as "changing organization, moving to self-employment or by rejecting opportunities for promotions" (Priola and Brannan, 2009, p. 392). When conceptualising barriers to career progression for disabled employees there are differences compared to gender-based barriers. For example, Roulstone and Williams (2014, p. 22) mixed-method research exploring the experiences of disabled women and men managers in the UK, found evidence of 'glass partitions'. They argue that the concepts of 'glass cliff' (Ryan and Haslam 2005), 'glass ceiling' (Wilson-Kovacs et al., 2008), or 'glass slipper' (Simpson and Kumra, 2015) are not applicable to disabled workers. Instead, the managers interviewed were 'ontologically' worried about moving roles internally and externally, as the current support systems in place or the accommodations acquired were seen as fundamental to their ability to perform their job role. This highlights the importance of moral and material organisational support and how the stability from current support/accommodations is prioritised over career progression, especially for middle-level jobs. There is a need, however, for more intersectional conceptualisations that adequately account for the unique experiences of oppression that disabled women and men face in different workplaces.

In contrast to above, there is evidence many disabled individuals change careers and/or jobs to roles more suited to their disability to overcome any barriers they encounter at work (Baumberg, 2015; Duffy and Dik, 2009). These changes seek to improve their quality of life and include the reduction of working hours or better physical access at work. Baldrige and Kulkarni's (2017) qualitative study explore how participants in the USA managed their identity formations alongside their professional careers post-hearing loss. The

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study found that participants initially resisted their change in hearing status through developing strategies to overcome difficulties experienced in the workplace. However, for many, certain ‘trigger’ events highlighted the detrimental effect of the hearing loss and they re-evaluated their (in)ability to perform their job role as they could no longer maintain their social identity as a hearing individual. Baldrige and Kulkarni (2017) reported that their respondents redefined their self-identity to hearing-impaired through career changes to positions often linked to their hearing loss, such as working with other d/Deaf⁶ individuals. This suggests that the change to their job roles affected their identity as they started to accept rather than resist the change; they found a good fit “in which one’s changed ability allows for meaningful contributions” (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017, p. 1232). Baldrige and Kulkarni’s work supports the claims of previous studies, such as Jammaers et al. (2016), that material/bodily changes can alter the discourses the participants engaged with when making a career change. This included enacting ability and awareness focused practices and resisting oppressive practices of disability and disadvantage. Although not applicable to low-skilled careers and other disabilities (e.g. developmental disabilities), this study highlights how negotiating and accepting material differences/changes can positively impact employment experiences which critiques, to some extent, the impact of ableism in the workplace.

Baldrige and Kulkarni’s (2017) findings demonstrate how their participants engaged in identity work (Alvesson et al., 2008). The participants changed jobs to resolve the conflict in their physical ability to fulfil their job role as they could no longer perform to able-bodied norms. This supports previous research (e.g. Baumberg, 2015) which found that disabled employees would attempt to manage their own abilities and their employers’ able-bodied expectations in mainstream jobs prior to finding a more suitable job to mitigate conflict. However, a change in employment does not always mitigate the difficulties experienced in the workplace. For individuals with a deteriorating disability or where the impact of the impairment is too great (from a personal and/or organisational perspective), alternative types of employment, ill-health retirement, or unemployment may be more ‘suitable’.

⁶ The term deaf is used in multiple ways throughout the thesis. Deaf (with a capital D) refers to those who are born without hearing or have lost it before they learned to talk. For them sign language is their first language. Whereas deaf (with a lowercase d) is used “to identify anyone who has a severe hearing problem. Sometimes it is used to refer to people who are severely hard of hearing too”, and English is their first language (The Deaf Health Charity SignHealth, 2020). If referring to a group of more than one individual the use of d/Deaf is used to reflect the differences across the group.

2.4. Alternative Employment

The barriers to obtaining mainstream employment can push disabled individuals to consider an alternative and more inclusive type of employment, for example, self-employment (Hall and Wilton, 2011). Examples of these are self-employment, entrepreneurship, or sheltered employment. These are discussed below.

2.4.1. Self-employment

Although self-employment offers more flexibility and individualised working conditions, barriers remain (Ashley and Graf, 2018). Castillo and Fischer's (2019) survey found that personality variables, specifically pro-active personality and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, were important factors for self-employment intentions for disabled individuals. Furthermore, those who feared failure and scored lower optimism scores were less likely to intend to start a self-run business. This indicates that personal drives are important in influencing what type of alternative employment is suitable for disabled individuals. Disabilities that are socially seen as 'severe', for example a learning difficulty, lead to these individuals facing greater difficulties entering the labour market. Those with learning disabilities may have no 'choice', due to oppressive practices, but to search for alternative opportunities outside of mainstream employment, such as sheltered employment (Hall and Wilton, 2011). Nonetheless, research has shown that individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) can be taught skills needed for self-employment. Dotson et al.'s (2013) experimental study on teaching the skills needed to check, empty, and maintain recycling bins throughout a college building to young adults with DD was largely successful. Dotson et al. (2013, p. 2349) concluded that:

[b]y demonstrating that it is possible to teach some of these skills using common teaching procedures and environmental supports, and that it is possible to document the learning outcomes systematically, we hope to set the occasion for future research to add to a growing body of empirical literature on evidence-based best practices in achieving important employment and quality of life outcomes for adults with DD.

2.4.2. Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is an alternative route into employment for disabled women and men. One of the benefits of starting an enterprise is the tailored accommodations that offer independence and flexibility in an environment of their choice (Buhariwala et al., 2015). Nonetheless, disabled individuals still encounter problems which impede success, such as

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discrimination from stakeholders and difficulties in accessing funds. Harris et al., (2014) held focus groups with 27 American disabled social entrepreneurs and had one-to-one interviews with stakeholders. They found that many entered social entrepreneurship to draw on their own experiences of a social problem they aim to address (Zahra et al., 2009) and to overcome the barriers they faced on attempting to enter mainstream employment, such as stigma and discrimination. Harris et al. (2014) conclude that there is a need to recognise the social innovation potential of disabled social entrepreneurs. However, this involves challenging the current perceptions that disabled applicants cannot successfully manage their own business compared to able-bodied entrepreneurs. However, there are issues with the sample in Harris et al.'s research as the majority of the men were white (33%) and the majority of the women were black (33%). This would have impacted the experiences across the two groups as black disabled women are members to three minority groups and are likely to experience three different types of oppression: racism, ableism and sexism. Another alternative space for employment for individuals who have a disability is sheltered employment which is discussed next.

2.4.3. Supported and sheltered employment

There are two forms of employment available to individuals who need extra support: supported and sheltered. Supported employment provides support to negotiate and maintain mainstream employment (Wehman, 2011). Sheltered employment or sheltered workshops are “generally segregated from the wider community, and work often involves repetitive tasks” (McGlinchey et al., 2013, p. 336), such as packing and labelling. The phrase ‘sheltered workshop’ is contested. Officially the UK Government has moved away from this term and instead refers to them as supported businesses. Supported and sheltered employment have been the subject of much debate in academic literature and government publications. Many scholars have critiqued the cost-effectiveness of sheltered workshops which resulted in the widespread closure of sheltered workshops in the UK, for example, Rempoy (DWP, 2013; Sayce, 2011). Recent debates on sheltered employment in western society have been heavily influenced by the economic downturn in the UK and USA, and UK Government officials are now pushing for more individual support systems which are seen to be more ‘cost-effective’ for disabled individuals (DWP, 2014; Cimera, 2011a). In the UK, however, there has been a lack of research on sheltered employment in recent years with evidence on sheltered workshop stemming from studies in the USA or Canada.

Sheltered workshops in the UK have undergone major restructuring in recent years, mainly due to Liz Sayce's (2011) report which called into question the economic and moral

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outputs of Remploy sheltered factories. Prior to the report Remploy Enterprise Business had a network of 54 workshops across the UK, but by 2013 all of these had been closed or sold (Fox, 2014). The remaining factories or sheltered workshops are privately owned or charity-based workshops that are supported by multiple funding grants. Although cost-effectiveness is an important factor for organisations and funders to consider, it is to be expected that organisations that support disabled individuals are going to require more funds than mainstream organisations. Equally of importance, supported or sheltered organisations should not be subject to able-bodied normative and performative expectations. Cimera's (2011a, 2011b) research compared sheltered and supported employment by assessing and comparing wages, hours worked and the likelihood of gaining employment in mainstream organisations. The analysis suggests that disabled individuals benefited from better wages and better working hours in supported employment than those working in sheltered workshops. However, there is no mention of the individuals' personal experiences within the different types of employment nor is the severity of their impairments considered. Although those who attend sheltered employment are less successful financially, research has found little difference in the quality of life scores across different employment groups (adult day care programs, sheltered workshops, or the community-integrated employment) for disabled individuals (Blick et al., 2016). Interestingly Blick et al. (2016, p. 365) demonstrated that "nearly all participants (over 95%) across groups reported satisfaction with their current daily activity. In addition, few participants across groups expressed interest in changing their current daytime activity". Within this thesis I aim to explore this further by comparing the personal experiences of disabled women and men who work at either mainstream or sheltered organisations.

Despite extant literature scrutinising the economic viability and employment transferability for those who attend sheltered workshops, there is scant data that draws upon the personal experiences of disabled individuals who have worked, or are working, in a sheltered environment. An exception to this is a paper by Michael Gill (2005) who draws upon his personal experience of working in a sheltered workshop. Gill's (2005) main criticism is that sheltered workshops cause isolation and act as a way of contractualizing disability. His definition of contractualizing disability is that societal discourses create disability. Furthermore, by labelling an individual as disabled and placing them into an organisation that caters specifically for disabled employees, it reinforces isolation and ableism in the community. Gill (2005, p. 616), like others (e.g. Cimera, 2014, 2012, 2011), claims that "the entire system is faulty" as workshops continue employment for the most capable of the workers to ensure ideal working conditions. This causes the stagnation of

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disabled individuals as they do not transition to mainstream employment, which is a primary aim of the organisation.

While one of the main criticisms of sheltered workshops is the isolation of those attending, there are many other types of employment where the workforce is segregated from society, notably the armed forces, manufacturing factories, and farms. Furthermore, the voices of those who work in a sheltered environment are often not heard in research and there is an assumption that sheltered employment is a negative working space. Such conclusions can be disastrous, as shown by the closure of the sheltered employment workshops in the UK. The closure of these workplaces has left many of disabled individuals unemployed (estimated at 75% in 2018) as there are insufficient alternatives to support the workforce (Henderson, 2018). It is therefore important that a new viable alternative should be embraced to account for the lack of progression in mainstream society, where able-bodied norms continue to exclude disabled workers in many organisations. Hall and Wilton (2011, p. 877) conclude that policies and legislation that seek to:

create employment opportunities for disabled people have focused primarily on the employability of individuals, rather than on the disabling character of work environments. It is perhaps unsurprising that the proportion of disabled people in employment remains persistently low relative to the rest of the working-age population.

This emphasises the precarious situation that disabled individuals face is not related to their impairment but is instead due to the oppressive work practices that exclude these workers. Disabled individuals are thus expected to adapt to the workplace rather than expecting the organisation and or employer to adapt their normative working practices and policies.

One aspect that has received little attention within sheltered workshops is identity. Some scholars argue that those who identify as or are identified as disabled or women experience oppression during their interactions with other people and social spaces (e.g. Thomas, 1999; Goodley, 2014). Importantly, there is a lack of research which explores how identity is performatively enacted across different types of employment. This warrants exploration in a qualitative research study to assess the impact of different work cultures/norms on oppressive practices.

2.5. Disability and gender identities

An individual's identity is shaped by different experiences, personalities, and traits, all of which encompasses who they are (Shakespeare, 2006). Alvesson et al. (2008, p. 11) suggest

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that “[h]ow we understand ourselves is shaped by larger cultural and historical formations, which supply much of our identity vocabularies, norms, pressures, and solutions, yet which do so in indirect and subtle ways”. This research explores how identity is performatively enacted within sociomaterial environments (e.g. the workplace, society, or the home). Many disciplines have their own definitions and theoretical framings of identity. Knights and Clarke (2017), however, have critically reviewed the way in which identity has been constructed within management and organisational studies. They argue that the current framing of identity is experiencing a “temporary amnesia and myopia” (Knights and Clarke, 2017, p. 338). Knights and Clarke (2017, p. 338, added emphasis) stress that they:

are not questioning the prevalent centrality of identity as an everyday concern, but rather the sense in which *researchers fail to question or investigate individuals’ subjective attachment to it* and how this reproduces the narcissism of contemporary life whether at work or in society more generally.

Knights and Clarke (2017, p. 338) also argue that the ability to maintain a stable identity, or a “fully autonomous self”, is a fallacy as identity formations rely on the validation of others. Further to this, the goal to achieve the ideal self appears to move in tandem with the individual, meaning the goal is always just out of reach: this maintains a sense of unfulfilled potential (Costea et al., 2012). Knights and Clarke (2017) argue that scholars need to challenge rather than reinforce everyday preoccupations on identity. They argue that to move forward in identity research, future analysis should abandon a disembodied and sole discursive focus of identity. Instead research studies should rework the body and other material realities back into the equation. This thesis directly incorporates this recommendation. As discussed in Chapter 1, this project moves away from re-presenting an essentialist and binary framing of disability and gender identity. Instead, I explore how identity is performative and enacted through the material-discursive practices that occur during an individual’s intra-action(s) with other bodies, material objects, and sociomaterial spaces. This is explored by analysing how the body and the discourses that surround bodies are mutually affected by their entanglement with sociomaterial spaces. However, as is discussed throughout this chapter, the majority of empirical work on disability identity has primarily focused on the discursive element of identity, maintaining a disembodied construction of a disabled/gendered/organisational identity.

2.5.1. Identity work

Identity work is a core concept within organisational identity literature that has been developed, refined, and challenged in recent years. Alvesson et al. (2008, p. 15) define

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identity work as an “ongoing mental activity that an individual undertakes in constructing an understanding of self that is coherent, distinct and positively valued”. Others, such as Watson (2008, p. 129), define it as:

“the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence the various social-identities which pertain to them in the various milieu in which they live their lives”.

Scholars within this field suggest that individuals who face everyday stress and anxieties in their place of work (and other settings) engage in identity work to overcome these issues, as well as other barriers and threats to who they are. Alvesson et al. (2008, p. 15) add that engaging with identity work “may arise from encounters with others that challenge understandings of self”. Brown (2017, p. 298) defines identity work as “the many ways in which people create, adapt, signify, claim and reject identities from available resources”. Similar to Knights and Clarke (2017), Brown (2017, p. 300) argues that the “deliberate combined use of multiple approaches might permit greater appreciation of the multifaceted, interconnected ways in which identities are worked on and identification enacted, and this may have potential to encourage more broad ranging theorizing and richer empirical research”.

Although identity work is a process undertaken by all individuals, those labelled with socially stigmatised identities are subject to more oppressive practices and therefore many have to engage in a more challenging form of identity work to maintain a positive sense of self. Identities such as woman, disabled, criminal, black, or Muslim, that intersect with one other, for example black disabled women, are tangled with powerful social discourses that result in misjudgements and stereotypical inferences. Toyoki and Brown (2014, p. 715-16) explain that a:

“stigmatized identity is an effect of power and can marginalize an individual, resulting in that person being disqualified from full societal acceptance. Stigmatized individuals and groups are, nevertheless, often able to cultivate alternative positive conceptions of their selves, and to enact self-serving impression management tactics, which accommodate, mitigate, transmute, deflect, defend and contest understandings of their selves”.

This is prominent in historically informed and cultural-based social minority identities such as disability. Often assumptions are placed on all disabled individuals inaccurately, inferring

homogeneity. Although identity work is seen as a mental activity that people engage in, more research is needed to expand this to explore how identity work is a material-discursive activity that is enacted within sociomaterial spaces. Limited studies have explored the material aspects of identity work. For example, Symon and Pritchard's (2015, p. 258) study on how the use of phones by railway engineers affected their identity work found that "the material is also implemented in identity regulation and how new forms of power relations are created". Within the thesis I will therefore consider how the entanglement of material elements affect the identity work of disabled women and men, and its impact on the performative identities of disabled women and men. As seen above, the practices that are enacted within the workplace also have an impact on the inclusive or exclusive experiences of disability and gender within these spaces. It is therefore important for a more individual-based analysis to account for the entangled elements that impact the performative enactment of identity and how these factors are resisted or reinforced.

2.5.2. Disability identity

When individuals acquire an impairment, illness, or other condition, their embodied experiences and the discourses enacted within spaces can affect their sense of self. For example, individuals who are d/Deaf fear assumptions are made about their cognitive abilities (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017). In such cases, an individual's perception of the self and the society's perception of the individual are in conflict. In an organisational context, inaccurate perceptions can affect an employers' likelihood of hiring disabled individuals. Research has shown how individuals engage in individual and/or collective strategies to mitigate the negative effects of discourses associated to disability, such as concealing their impairment (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). However, this is only possible in social interactions when an individual's impairment is invisible (Lindsay et al., 2014). Importantly, however, this does not address the underlying social inequality, it merely masks it. Nonetheless, research has demonstrated that individuals with an impairment do not necessarily view themselves as disabled (Watson, 2002). For example, the embodied experiences of those with congenital impairments are 'normal' which challenges "the very discursive practices that are used to identify them" (Watson, 2002, p. 524). This demonstrates the limits of a discursive conceptualisation of identity as it does not accurately convey the embodied experiences of disabled people (Loja et al., 2013). The length of time experiencing an impairment, illness or condition also affects an individual's sense of self. Those who have a disability for a longer period of time have been found to have a more positive sense of self in comparison with those adjusting to a different/new condition (Nario-

Redmond et al., 2013). For this thesis it has been deemed important to consider how dominant social norms affects the performative enactment of a disability and gender. To address this, I will explore how disabled women and men intra-act with others bodies, material objects (e.g. technology, work equipment) and sociomaterial spaces. I will also explore how disabled women and men reinforce or disrupt oppressive social norms that affect their embodiment in the workplace.

Another point for consideration is the social context in which a person's identity becomes salient or not. Dunn and Burcaw (2013, p. 149) explain that "an individual's disability identity might be activated when he or she is confronted with an inaccessible public building but not when drafting a legal brief with a colleague at the office". However, Dunn and Burcaw's conceptualisation is pertinent to a physical disability rather than an invisible neurological condition (e.g. dementia) or mood disorder (e.g. bipolar disorder). This nonetheless demonstrates that identity is performatively enacted not only through social interactions with others but also the material world. Chapter 3 discusses materiality as part of the theoretical framework that informs the data analysis. However, it is important to note here that there are multiple elements (personal, social, political, organisational discourses, psychical space, and material reality) that intersect to affect the embodied experiences of a person at a given moment. The literature that explores the various factors that combine to affect disabled women and men's' identity constructions and their embodied experiences is discussed next.

2.5.3. Disabled women

Research that specifically explores the experiences of disabled women was prominent in the 1990s when feminist writers such as Carol Thomas, Jenny Morris, and Nasa Begum contested the male-dominated models of disability (Thomas, 2006, 1999). They argued that the medical model and social model of disability left out personal and often oppressive experiences of disability. They also argue that these models do not consider the intersection of gender and other characteristics, for instance age, sexuality, ethnicity, social class, with a disability, nor the impact these have on people's experiences of intersecting oppression. This research was largely instigated by scholars and activists drawing on their own experiences of oppression across a number of different sociomaterial spaces such as home, education and employment (see Morris, 1993a, 1993b, 1991). Begum (1992), drawing on her experience as a disabled woman, argues that disability and gender are social constructions that fail to fit the dominant historical and cultural norms embedded within society. She states that "both roles available to disabled women label us as inferior, passive and weak" (Begum, 1992, p.

72). Begum (1992) emphasised that disabled women face two types of discrimination, ableism and sexism. Many researchers have referred to the experience of sexism and ableism as a double disadvantage (Gerschick, 2000; Traustadottir, 1990). It is argued that social norms which privilege middle-class white men remain embedded within society and organisational institutions (Braidotti, 2016). Further to this, scholars have identified that there is an absence of qualitative research exploring the “day-to-day experiences of women in the workplace” (Fevre et al., 2013, p. 290), and from the perspective of disabled women even less so.

Research has found that gender stereotypes are not as prevalent for disabled individuals as they are for non-disabled individuals. For example, Nario-Redmond’s (2010, p. 479) open-ended questionnaire on cultural stereotypes of disability with college students found overlapping stereotypical characteristics attributed to both disabled women and men: dependent, incompetent, asexual, unattractive, passive, and heroic survivor. They differed in that disabled men were categorised as being angry, inferior and lazy. Whereas disabled women were categorised as societally excluded, vulnerable, poor, and homeless. Overall, in this study, there were no significant gender differences between disabled women and men, suggesting that gender stereotypes were not ascribed to disabled people in the same way as non-disabled individuals. Therefore, in order to assess the social relational, or rather the sociomaterial, oppressive practices and the embodied experiences of disabled women and men, intersectional studies are crucial to understanding their lived experiences of oppression (Thomas, 1999). Nario-Redmond’s (2010) research also suggests that disabled men may experience prejudice for not adhering to hegemonic masculine norms, as the disabled men in the study were attributed fewer masculine traits and more feminine traits than non-disabled men. This study indicates, as previously theorised (e.g. Thomas, 1999), that cultural and societal norms which oppress disabled people can be reified by disabled individuals themselves. However, the research context reduces the validity of this assumption due to the controlled within-subjects experimental design and the briefing given to students which were likely affected by social desirability bias⁷ (Lavrakas, 2008). Additional qualitative research is needed to consider how the sociomaterial environment affects the reinforcement or rejection of the social norms attached to identity categories.

Morris’ (1991) influential work highlights the prejudice disabled women and men face on a daily basis from non-disabled individuals. She argues these often-inaccurate

⁷ Social desirability refers to ‘the tendency of research subjects to give socially desirable responses instead of choosing responses that are reflective of their true feelings’ (Grimm, 2010)

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attitudes and assumptions have a profound impact on disabled individuals, especially disabled women's social interactions. Going further in her argument, Morris (1991, p. 126) claims that "[o]ur disability frightens people... Having put up clear barriers between us and them, non-disabled people further hide their fear and discomfort by turning us into objects of pity, comforting themselves by their own kindness and generosity". She surmises that "[i]t is this response which lies at the heart of the discrimination we face — in employment, in housing, in access and not a result of individual inadequacies" (p. 126). This has been reported time and again by subsequent research findings as is evidenced above.

Disabled individuals, particularly disabled women, can experience sexual harassment as well as discrimination and sexism which has a significant impact on an individual's well-being (Mirta and Mouradian, 2014). Shaw et al. (2012) investigated reported harassment claims across a number of employment sectors in the USA such as manufacturing, administration, healthcare, and retail, looking specifically at intersecting characteristics. Their research found that the highest reported claims of harassment stemmed from women over the age of 36, whose ethnicity was Hispanic or American Indian, and who had a behavioural disability. Shaw et al.'s (2012) study demonstrate how individuals belonging to multiple/intersecting minority groups (woman, disability and ethnic minority) are more likely to experience horrendous ordeals in their workplace. Similar findings regarding harassment of disabled women have been found in UK contexts. For instance, Grainger and Fitzner (2006) found that disabled employees are five times more likely to have experienced forms of sexual harassment than employees who did not have disability.

Research has also shown that discrimination occurs across all types and levels of employment (i.e. blue-collar jobs and white-collar jobs). Foster and Williams' (2015) review of professional workers highlights the issues that disabled women can face in entering, securing and progressing within their professional fields. These issues include lack of workplace flexibility, long working hours, lack of work-life balance and gendered social networks (i.e. meetings in the pub or golfing out of working hours). All of these hinder the working ability of disabled women with a condition that fluctuates and/or with caring responsibilities. Foster and Williams' (2015) review demonstrates the difficulties endured by professionals, even if it is assumed that they are afforded a greater sense of control over their employment. The accounting profession, for example, provides more economic security but experiences similar barriers to other professions in gaining accommodations with the added pressures of upholding able-bodied and masculine ideals within higher levels of employment.

One of the key developments within the field of masculinity and disability, as with the feminist studies above, is the use of an intersectional lens to assess if and how disabled men are subject to intersecting oppressions (Shuttleworth et al., 2012). One of the critiques of earlier work, as discussed above, is that disability and gender do not exist as separate or even conjoined attributes; they intersect with race/ethnicity, religion, sexuality, social class, and age. Many scholars suggest there is a discursive conflict between masculinity and disability (Pini and Conway, 2017; Shuttleworth et al., 2012; Connell, 1995, 1990; Gerschick and Miller, 1994). Hegemonic masculinity is associated with strength, independence, authority, and initiative (Connell, 2005, 1990) and is an idealised and dominant norm that men are socialised to strive for. On the other hand, disability is stereotypically associated with weakness, dependency, and uncertainty, which are historically seen as more feminine characteristics. One of the key studies in this area (Gerschick and Miller, 1994) developed the work of previous scholars, notably Connell (1990), to posit the three R framework: reliance, reformulation, and rejection. Gerschick and Miller's (1994) study on disabled men, who acquired impairments, found that these men relied on one of three strategies to maintain a positive sense of self. They either *relied* on hegemonic norms of masculinity; they *reformulated* their masculinity in line with their current abilities post-impairment; or alternatively they *rejected* previous hegemonic norms of masculinity to avoid conflict. On rejecting hegemonic masculinity the men instead adopted a new version of masculinity that fit with their embodied experiences (conflict resolution). The three R framework has been utilised by scholars (see Pini and Conway, 2017, below) to demonstrate the fluidity of disability and gender norms, and how at different times, or within specific contexts, these social discourses can cause conflict affecting an individual's sense of self.

Experiences of ableism and sexism are more prominent in certain working environments, such as where a man is working in a woman-dominated industry and vice versa. Woodhams et al.'s (2015a) quantitative research found that disabled men, working in the lowest grade of a large organisation dominated by women, were less likely to receive a promotion than non-disabled men (2.3% versus 9.4%). Disabled men also experienced fewer promotion opportunities than women with and without a disability (3.4% versus 6.8%) (Woodhams et al., 2015a). Woodhams et al. (2015a, p. 289) found that "men with a disability are considerably more likely than other men to find themselves in the female dominated lowest grade, and they are less likely to ride the glass escalator out of it". However, this finding is limited as it does not investigate all the variables that affected this result, nor does

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it illuminate the subjective embodiment of the experienced disadvantage. The study indicates that disabled men experience fewer career-advancement opportunities than non-disabled men *and* than disabled women in a women-dominated industry. This contradicts previous studies that men experience greater privilege than women in employment by riding the glass escalator within gendered work environments/industries (Williams, 1995). The intersection of disability and gender, therefore, creates a unique barrier, or a lack of ‘fit’, for disabled men in this context.

Sang et al.’s (2016) study adds to the findings of Woodhams et al. (2015a) by conducting qualitative research which explores how work practices within the transport industry (typically dominated by men) are both gendered and ableist. Specifically, they “suggest humour is a practice which helps to form a hierarchy of masculinities in the workplace, marginalizing non-hegemonic women and men unable, or unwilling, to participate, for example those with Asperger syndrome” (Sang et al., 2016, p. 577). This highlights how the use of dominant discourses (masculinity and ableism) being enacted via language (humour) during work practices reinforce ingrained norms in society that result in the exclusion of those deemed other. These studies highlight the importance of intersectional research to further our understanding of intersecting forms of oppression, such as sexism and ableism within employment. More research is needed to explore how both sexism and ableism relationally affect the experiences of employment across a multitude of employment types. Furthermore, which organisational policies and practices reinforce or disrupt these oppressive practices.

More recent conceptualisations of masculinity have explored how changing feminist discourses have led to identity conflicts for men as they engage with social changes. Pecis and Priola (2019, p. 1414) use the term the ‘new industrial man’ in their research with Italian men who worked as researchers in an organisation dominated by women. The analysis revealed men drew on heteronormative gender differences to explain how they were better researchers than women, despite there being far more women than men within the organisation. Pecis and Priola (2019, p. 1428) conclude that “postfeminist discourses influence constructions of contemporary masculinities by legitimizing a messiness rooted in contradictions that, whilst vocalizing the pressures men experience in this new postfeminist cultural landscape, they maintain men's centrality and power and mask persisting workplace gender inequalities”. It is important, then, that research explores how discourses such as feminism affect the identity work of disabled women and men.

Ostrander (2008) explored the identity constructions of African-American men who became disabled through a spinal cord injury caused by gang violence. Specific to the intersecting identities within these men (e.g. race/ethnicity/gender/disability), they found their disability identity did not disrupt their racial identity. However, their disability identity did challenge their masculinity in relation to intimate relationships, sexual encounters, body image, and self-defence. The study found the participants repressed and/or rejected their disability identity to maintain their masculinity which represented power within their community. Notably, the study concluded that concepts such as masculinity and disability are enacted or disrupted across different social contexts. Recent research has shown that concepts such as masculinity are temporal and space-specific (Giazitzoglu, 2020), which can be applied to other concepts such as disability. For example, Ostrander (2008) identified how environmental factors (i.e. different spaces) influence how individuals construct and/or maintain a positive sense of self. These are subject to changes reflecting an individual's culture, interpersonal networks, social-economic status and the importance ascribed to each (Visagie and Swartz, 2018). Similarly, in other global regions, such as South Africa, Visagie and Swartz, (2018) found that most of the disabled men interviewed did not identify as being disabled, as this conflicted with their imperative to maintain a masculine identity. When asked to define disability they stated it was "when someone cannot do anything for himself" (Visagie and Swartz, 2018, p. 1803). These studies indicate that labels such as disability can be defined differently to fulfil a different function such as to maintain one's positive sense of self. For example, the participants in the two studies discussed (Visagie and Swartz, 2018; Ostrander, 2008) challenge the stereotypical discourses entangled with the term disability by discussing what they can do regardless of their impairment. Therefore, in order to mitigate any conflict with their disability and their other identities they engaged in identity work to alter their sense of self from negative (i.e. inability) to positive (i.e. ability). What is of interest to this thesis is how disabled individuals adapt or modify their sense of selves and/or rejecting dominant norms within a specific social context.

Widening the scope of inquiry, Pini and Conway's (2017) qualitative research with disabled fathers in rural areas of Queensland, Australia, supports Gerschick and Miller's (1994) argument that the three R framework is not limited to just one type of identity strategy (reliance, reformulate, or reject). They show that disabled men adopt more than one type of identity strategy, such as reliance and reformulation, to maintain a positive sense of self. Pini and Conway (2017) found that employment was important to a father's identity as they had a strong hegemonic masculine desire to be the breadwinner to support their family. The type of work they undertook, post-impairment, often needed to be adapted in some way to

accommodate their disability. However, the main challenge faced by those in the study was their rural location where there were fewer prospects for support, access, and employment. This study demonstrates how their geographical location, working-class socio-economic status, disability type and discourses of rural fatherhood (especially their own) impacted the importance attributed to employment. Being able to work was discussed as being important to their economic security and to maintain their family heritage of being rural farmers. The subsequent section explores the wider contextual elements that surround disability and gender research which impact an individuals' experiences, such as the psychological impact of a disability and socio-economic status.

2.6. Wider considerations within disability and gender research

One of the criticisms of previous studies is the lack of contextualisation that affects the experiences of disabled women and men inside and outside of the workplace. To address this, some scholars have adopted an intersectional lens to explore how gender, disability, race, class, ethnicity, age etc intersect to affect their experiences of oppression. The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw (1989) when discussing the experience of employment discrimination that black women faced as they were inadequately protected by gender or race legal precedent. She argued that black women experienced intersecting forms of oppression related to their gender (being a woman), and their ethnicity (being black). Both of which were unaccounted for in feminist research and legal practices which were primarily based on white women's or black men's experiences. The term and use of intersectionality have increasingly been challenged and developed. An intersectional lens is argued by some to be central to the exploration of "inequality, identity and power relations" by "highlighting the inseparability of categories of social difference...and calling attention to the systemic power dynamics that arise as multiple dimensions of social difference interact across individual, institutional, cultural and societal spheres of influence" (Rodriguez et al., 2016, p. 201). This section explores what elements affect the experiences of oppression that disabled women and men face.

2.6.1. The psychological impact of disability

Research has found that individuals who have disabilities are also likely to experience emotional and psychological distress, such as stress, depression, and anxiety, as a result of managing or coming to terms with their disability (e.g. Bogart, 2015; Lerman et al., 2015; Dunn and Burcaw, 2013; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). Brown's (2014) analysis, based on a cross-sectional survey, investigated the intersection of gender, disability, and psychological and economic well-being of residents within a region of Florida, USA. They

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found that disabled women were more likely to experience four psychological risk factors than disabled men: emotional reliance, perceived devaluation, functional limitation, and self-esteem. Two studies (Brown, 2014; Turner and McLean, 1989) have both found that those with a physical disability was more likely to experience depression and anxiety than the non-disabled control group. Within both studies disabled women experience higher rates of depression and anxiety than the disabled men, indicating gender differences. More recent studies have shown that a lack of social/emotional support for disabled people was statistically significant ($p < .001$) with higher reports of depression, and poor mental and physical quality of life indicators (Arabyat and Raisch, 2019). Additional research has shown that depression and anxiety were lower for those with multiple sclerosis when they had a positive disability identity (Bogart, 2015). This further complicates the factors (e.g. support received, type and severity of disability, gender, sense of self) that affect the psychological health of disabled people. Although Brown's (2014) findings are informative and demonstrate the psychological difference in managing a disability for women and men, there are several limitations of the study including the age of the respondents (40-93 with a mean age of 62), which does not accurately reflect the breadth of the working-age population, and other limitations intrinsic to the survey tool. Furthermore, the disabilities reported in the survey were predominantly age-related physical disabilities, such as diabetes and arthritis, which limits how transferable these results are to other physical, neurological, cognitive or intellectual disabilities in younger adults. These studies on their own, however, do not explain or provide evidence of the oppressive practices that cause these findings.

Specific to the gender differences, qualitative research has indicated that men are less likely to share their personal or emotional experiences in order to uphold their masculine identity (Flurey et al., 2017). Further to this, a lack of trust or rapport with the researcher(s) can also affect the quality and quantity of data collected. For example, Flurey et al.'s (2018) qualitative study exploring masculinity and rheumatoid arthritis identified that the level, or depth, of personal data disclosed during focus groups was far less detailed than during interviews. The type of methodology used in research is thus important when considering the type of data needed to answer research questions. Further to this, Flurey et al. (2018; 2017) and others have investigated just one type of a disability, however, it is argued that a greater understanding of experiences of disability can be achieved by focusing on a variety of disabilities, specifically by considering how social interactions and the system(s) that have, or have not, been put in place affect experiences of disability in the workplace.

Additional research has explored the intersecting oppressions of disability and gender with other demographics. For example, Kavanagh et al. (2015) explored the correlation of socio-economic status of women and men with different types of disabilities in Australia. They found that disabled people (all types) experienced higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage compared with non-disabled individuals. However, individuals with speech or sensory disabilities experienced the lowest form of socio-economic disadvantage, whilst individuals with intellectual, psychological, or a brain-related impairment experienced the highest. Nonetheless, those with sensory disabilities have been found to have a significantly lower socio-economic status than non-disabled individuals (Kim et al., 2018). These findings highlight how socio-economic status is lower for most disabled people, and that disabled women endure more economic hardship than disabled men. Nonetheless, they do not explain why disabled individuals or disabled women experience these oppressive socio-economic practices. Kavanagh et al. (2015) found that those with the same type of disability were likely to endure similar levels of socio-economic disadvantage, but disabled women were less likely to be in paid employment. Although Kavanagh et al.'s study investigate multiple impairments they fail to further our understanding of the personal impact of lower economic status for disabled women and men, nor what external factors contribute towards these findings. Socio-economic disadvantage has been associated with higher levels of violence against disabled women and men, with physical and sensory impairments (Olofsson et al., 2015). Therefore, researchers, employers, and policymakers need to consider the wider intersecting characteristics that surround disabled individuals and how they impact their day-to-day embodied experiences.

Although these studies do quantitatively investigate the relational affect of oppressive practices on disabled women and men, they fail to further our understanding of personal everyday experiences of disabled women and men, and how this impacts their working lives (Harvey, 2018). One of the ways to overcome the limitations discussed in this section is for future research on gender, disability and employment to conduct ethnographic research. This enables researchers to immerse themselves in the desired context to observe the day-to-day interactions in that particular environment (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

2.7. Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on disability and gender to present disabled women and men's experiences of securing, maintaining and progressing within mainstream and

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alternative employment. The review has also explored how identity conceptualisations are rejected, reinforced or reformulated on an individual basis, within society and within organisations. The findings demonstrate that there are gender differences in how disabled women and men are performatively judged due to dominant social norms, namely masculinity, ableism and capitalist productivity norms. Furthermore, there are gender differences in how disabled women and men access, maintain, and progress in employment. Disabled men, however, like their non-disabled counterparts, appear to experience more privilege than disabled women due to embedded masculine and able-bodied norms within society. However, on closer analysis of the studies it becomes evident that there are similar experiences for disabled women and men where their disability status became more salient than their gender in the workplace. It has been argued that more research is needed that explores the multi-faceted elements which affect how identity-based social norms are reinforced, rejected or reformulated, with a focus on the embodied experiences of disabled women and men within their working environment. Overall, this review has highlighted that the opportunities and support available for many disabled individuals are inadequate and therefore places them in a disadvantaged position compared with their non-disabled peers.

The review has identified a need for further research that accounts for both the material and the discursive factors when exploring the embodied experiences of employment for disabled women and men. Disembodied studies fail to efficiently address inequality in society, they merely document it. The review has revealed how identity constructions differ when normative ideals are reinforced, rejected, and reformulated. It was shown that there are a number of entangled factors which affect the experience of employment, including a person's gender, type of disability, age, education level, employer's knowledge of disability, the type of employment, the physical work environment, and the organisation's equality and diversity policies and practices. By broadly contextualising the sociological and psychological factors that surround disability, greater awareness and understanding of the experiences of disabled individuals are generated. The consideration of the wider political and legislative context further enhances our understanding of the everyday experience for disabled women and men. It is clear since the financial crash of 2007/8 there has been an increase in hardship for many disabled employees which has had far-reaching effects on the overall well-being of disabled individuals across the UK.

Multiple types of employment were explored in this review including mainstream, self-employment, entrepreneurship, supported employment and sheltered employment. Although sheltered employment is widely criticised for its economic viability and its failure

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to transition employees to mainstream employment, this type of employment can provide a supportive environment for disabled women and men. Overall, this review has demonstrated that employers are still in need of practical advice and guidance to implement inclusion policies. This is evidenced by the continued reporting of fears of employers regarding the logistics of employing disabled individuals which continue to reproduce oppressive practices. To address this, more research is needed for employers/practitioners on how to support disabled employees on an individual *and* organisational level. Specifically, more specialised and bespoke knowledge and guidance is needed for organisations to strengthen the often-inadequate one-size-fits-all support which is leaving many disabled employees in a disadvantaged position (for example Department for Work & Pensions, 2017b; Williams and Fredrick, 2015). The support practices and daily workings of alternative employment organisations can be utilised as a source of knowledge for mainstream organisations seeking a more inclusive working environment. To address this, the research undertaken for this thesis incorporates the assemblage of factors that impact the experiences of disabled women and men in employment as discussed in this review. To my knowledge there are no current studies in the UK that have completed a study which has explored the experiences of disabled women and men from mainstream employment and sheltered employment. The next chapter moves on to discuss the theoretical framework that addresses the theoretical gaps identified in this review.

Chapter 3: Review of the theoretical framework: feminist new materialism, embodiment, and feminist posthumanist performativity

As discussed in Chapter 2, it is important to consider the sociomaterial context in which disabled individuals are situated to show the complexity, and the convergence, of how multiple elements (e.g. socio-political systems, geopolitics, bio-politics, economics, technology) affect their experiences. One of the identified gaps in the organisational literature reviewed was how multiple factors affected the experiences of employment, such as discourses of capitalism, masculinity and ableism (Goodley, 2014; Sang et al., 2016; Charmaz, 2019). Currently, to understand disabled women and men's employment experiences one has to analyse management and organisation studies, identity studies, disability and feminism studies, legislation, and government policy documents. On their own these studies do not provide a holistic picture of the material *and* discursive practices that co-constitute a specific context and fails "to provide empirically adequate accounts" (Barad, 2007, p. 207).

This thesis problematises theories such as the medical model of disability and humanist framing of gender in a dualist, binary, and dialectical way, as they perpetuate the essentialist discourses that surround disability and gender. To overcome these limitations this thesis draws on the non-essentialist feminist new materialism, specifically feminist posthumanist performativity. This theoretical approach allows for the complex and multi-directional (rhizomatic) interplay of elements that surround the research context at the centre of the empirical analysis to be accounted for. Specifically, this chapter presents the multiple streams drawn upon for this thesis, identifying how and why these theoretical frameworks can be used to overcome the limitations of previous theorisations of disability. Whilst specifically drawing on feminist posthumanist performativity, this thesis aligns with a number of critical-based theoretical frameworks including critical disability studies (Goodley, 2013, 2014; Goodley et al., 2019), feminism (Morris, 1993; Arruza et al., 2019), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Corlett and Mavin, 2015), and feminist disability studies (Garland-Thomson, 2005; Hall, 2011; Simpican, 2017). These bodies of work all seek to deconstruct the dominant discourses within society that reproduce and reinforce social injustice (Simpican, 2017). Similarly, they focus on activism to advance women and disabled individuals' rights (Goodley, 2013). The aims of this thesis thus align with the transformative aims of other critical-based scholars to "make visible the historical and ongoing interrelationship between all forms of oppression" (Hall, 2011, p. 4).

3.1. Feminist new materialism

For this thesis, it is argued that a sole focus on the human body and on the oppressive discourses surrounding the human body, is not enough to disrupt the current humanist framing of disability embedded in the capitalist and biopolitical action of governments, e.g. welfare benefits practices (Braidotti, 2013a). What is needed, then, is a move away from a humanist theoretical framework, thereby decentring the human, to a feminist posthumanist performative theoretical framing of disability. Drawing on insights from critical disability studies, feminist disability studies, intersectionality and feminism, this thesis uses feminist new materialism, posthumanism, and performativity to push the scope of inquiry beyond the human subject to considering how other non-human and non-living objects can be drawn upon. Within critical disability studies, feminist disability studies and feminism, there are streams of scholars who have incorporated materiality within their research (e.g. Thomas, 1999; Flynn, 2017; Feely, 2016; Garland-Thomson, 2011) to address the material *and* the discursive elements, specifically their relationality, within their research agendas. As discussed in Chapter 1, I add to this critical and emancipatory vein of research, particular the feminist materialist work of Thomas (1999), but from a feminist posthumanist performative perspective. The primary aim of this thesis, therefore, is to critically explore the essentialist and normative material-discursive practices that result in the sociomaterial oppression of disabled women and men.

3.1.1. Theoretical notions surrounding feminist new materialism

Feminist new materialism is a theoretical framework that seeks to deconstruct dualistic and binary categories attached to human subjects (van der Tuin and Dolphijn, 2010; van der Tuin, 2011). This framework thus aligns with the non-essentialist definition and proposed sociomaterial model of disability I discussed in Chapter 1, that expands the feminist materialist work of Thomas (1999). Schnabel (2014, p. 12) states that feminist new materialism “moves away from the idea of humans as disembodied thinking subjects to humans as material bodies”. Specifically, she states that the framework:

problematise[s] the very concept of matter in its scientific and philosophical lineage, calling us to reconsider what we think about matter, highlighting the need to bring matter back into our understanding of social relations, and opening up the process of subjectivity to non-human life and even inanimate matter.

(Schnabel, 2014, p. 12)

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Similar to critical disability studies (see Goodley, 2014; Goodley et al., 2019) and feminist disability studies (Garland-Thomson, 2005, 2011), feminist new materialism has a political interest in the implications of events in the material world and what discursive practices govern society. Feminist new materialists thus have an interest in facilitating discussions on pressing matters in the current global context, such as the effects of global warming and capitalism on inequality. This also links with other feminist scholars' critiques of neoliberal capitalism (see Arruzza et al., 2019). Scholars such as van der Tuin and Dolphijn (2010), Barad (2007), Kirby (2017), and Braidotti (2013a, 2019), who align within the key tenets of the materialist theoretical framework, argue that there is a need for an alternative ontological and epistemological (or what Barad, 2007, refers to as 'ontoepistemological') stance that differs from the dominant poles of positivism and post-modernism. This is fuelled by the exhaustion of existing theoretical explanations. Feminist new materialism's ontological and epistemological position moves beyond the essentialist and boundary-making practice of the two epistemological poles. Barad (2007) has named her philosophical frameworks 'agential realism' which is discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 4. I use the term feminist new materialism to recognise the new theoretical direction that differs from but does not refute its Marxist roots. According to scholars such as Coole and Frost (2010) in their introduction of *New Materialism: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, theorists have pursued different avenues of inquiry within the field. These four avenues are discussed below.

1) Contesting and uptake of theories of matter

Scholars such as Barad (2007), Braidotti (2013a, 2013b), Coole and Frost (2010), Kirby (2017), and Pitts-Taylor (2016) discuss the importance of bridging links with the physical sciences, such as physics theories that investigate the complexity of matter. They do, however, caution readers that a Cartesian⁸ and Newtonian⁹ understanding of matter, although they have their historical importance, are "a long way from the material world we inhabit in our everyday lives" and thus cannot be relied upon by current new materialist scholars (Coole and Frost, p. 12). Instead, alternative physics-based theories, such as complexity theory or chaos theory¹⁰, are better suited to analyse our "complex, unstable, fragile, and

⁸ Cartesianism draws on the early work of philosopher René Descartes who posited a dualism of body and mind (subject-object) where the mind is seen as distinct from the body. Posthumanist performativity critiques this motion and argues that they are inextricably linked (material-discursive).

⁹ Newtonianism draws on the work of Isaac Newton. Newtonian physics draws on classical epistemological and ontological assumptions, namely "the existence of individual objects with determinate properties that are independent of our experimental investigations of them" (Barad, 2007, p. 106). Posthumanist performativity argues that apparatus (including the observer) forms part of the observed phenomena.

¹⁰ Chaos and complexity theory are often drawn upon together and were developed in recognition that classical philosophical conceptions could not account for the complexity of matter. Complexity theory

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interactive” environments (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 13). Cole and Frost (2010) explain how transverse the practical use of these theories are, in that they have multidisciplinary impacts from looking at the emergence and instability of the physical environment (e.g. weather and ecosystems), organic matter (e.g. plants and animals), social contexts (e.g. health and crime) and economics. The relation between the material world and discursive practices is a core feature that runs through all the theories that fit within the umbrella of new materialism which is discussed in more detail below. Therefore, to address the gaps identified in the previous chapter, this thesis adopts a relational perspective to explore the entanglement of space, time, and matter, noting how they mutually affect knowing and being for human and nonhuman subjects.

II) Biopolitics and biopower

Biopolitics refers to the intersection of (non)human biology and politics, with scholars such as Foucault (1977) defining biopolitics as the discipline and control of bodies and life itself. Foucault (1977) used the example of the panopticon within prisons, to explain how the object and subject are not separate entities but are mutually affective during power relations (i.e. control of bodies). However, Foucault’s theoretical framing of biopolitics has been critiqued in recent years by scholars who argue that his theory does not reflect the complexity of the current world context, and is limited by its humanist perspective (Braidotti, 2013a; Barad, 2003, 2007). Feminist new materialists are interested in recent developments, such as biomedicine and biotechnology, which are being hailed as having transcendent bioethical impacts on human and non-human beings in the material world. This is a form of biopower. Biopower is defined as “modern form of power and its purpose is to exert a positive influence on life, to optimise and multiply life, by subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations” (Ojakangas, 2005, p. 5). These include prosthetics, HIV treatments, preventative and curative treatment of a range of diseases, and genetically engineered food products such as soy: all of which have the potential to alter and enrich life. However, these biotechnologies are controlled by, to name a few, politics, religion, socio-economic status, and cultural beliefs which limits the impact these can have on a given population (if they get any access at all). On the opposite end of these advancements to life, there are also the negative, sometimes catastrophic, ethical implications of biopolitics. For example, how

“recognizes that complex behavior emerges from a few simple rules, and that all complex systems are networks of many interdependent parts which interact according to those rules” (Business Dictionary, 2019a). Chaos theory is a “Mathematical framework for understanding irregular and erratic fluctuations in economic cycles, financial markets, weather, other complex phenomenon, or non-linear systems with many variables. It suggests that small changes in the starting conditions produce outcomes totally out of proportion to their magnitude, making the phenomenon or system inherently unpredictable in the long term” (Business Dictionary, 2019b).

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pharmaceutical companies exploit the cost of medicine which can prevent access to lifesaving treatment (complicated by funding issues in the health services) (Hart, 2017), or the impact of global warming, namely rising sea levels and more intense weather patterns (e.g. Shukman, 2018).

III) Critical materialism

Critical materialist scholars analyse shifting viewpoints within social theory. This includes:

paying attention to the material, historical and sociological structures of international political economy that lend context as well as practical inertia to identities that entail unequal life chances. It calls for a detailed phenomenology of diverse lives as they are actually lived- *often in ways that are at odds with abstract normative theories.*

(Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 27, added emphasis)

This strand of new materialism is ideally suited to critically explore the oppressive practices embedded within society and institutions that exclude particular bodies. Within an organisational context, those who engage in a critical reflection of the material and the discursive, and explore political and sociological injustice, argue there is a practical need for more critical engendering of organisational performances. Coole and Frost (2010) argue that a key motivation for feminist critical new materialists is to understand the complexities of capitalism that impact and reproduce inequalities for human and nonhuman bodies. Bloom (2016), although not a new materialist, draws on a Lacanian understanding of the work-life balance and argues that human beings desire a sustainable and fair balance between work and life but are unable to achieve it. Bloom (2016, p. 600) further suggests that it is precisely this imbalance that “ironically structures present-day self-hood and identification. Consequently, capitalist work and organisations stand as the contemporary limit of ‘life’ through their fundamental role in producing and sustaining this ‘imbalanced’ subject”. Viewing Bloom’s claim through a new materialist lens and with a disability focus, the ‘imbalanced’ subject, as Bloom contends, is further constrained by additional but mutually affective discourses that converge with capitalist discourses. While a new materialist lens does not disagree with the overall argument of a work-life balance, this argument needs to be taken further. Specifically, it is suggested here that this ‘imbalance’ is an embodied experience that is performed, or comes into being, through the intra-action of multiple material-discursive practices (Barad, 2007). Disabled people experience great angst in

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striving for this work-life balance often to the detriment of their personal lives and personal health (Bê, 2019).

IV) Multimodal materialism

Multimodal materialism is a form of materiality that draws on all the core components of the first three discussed above. Coole and Frost (2010, p. 34) state that those who adopt multimodal materialism are interested in how “the capitalist economy, the juridico-political domain, and the material quotidian are interrelated but not in any fixed or formulaic way. It is these different levels and their shifting interconnections that a multimodal materialist analysis investigates”. Many theorists adopt this multi-modal analytical exploration which is discussed, although implicitly, throughout the rest of this chapter. What is of importance for this thesis is the recognition that politics, technology, science, discursive practices and the flesh are entangled to materialise bodies. It is recognised, therefore, that disability and gender are concepts enmeshed within specific historical and cultural practices that performatively enact bodies as disabled or gendered.

3.1.2. The inseparability of the material and the discursive

Feminist new materialists recognise the limitations of constructivism, namely the sole focus on language and the discursive turn, but importantly do not discount their ongoing influence thereby recognising their historicity (Barnwell, 2017). Importantly, discursive practices form a part of new materialism, but this perspective argues they are inextricably entangled with material phenomena. It is thus argued that the material world influences discursive practices, and similarly, discursive practices influence the material world. As shown in Figure 3.1, within a new materialist perspective, the relation between the material world and discursive practices is horizontal and mutually affective. This differs from other perspectives such as constructivism, shown via a vertical relation, where discursive practices occur in the material world (indicated with a directional arrow).

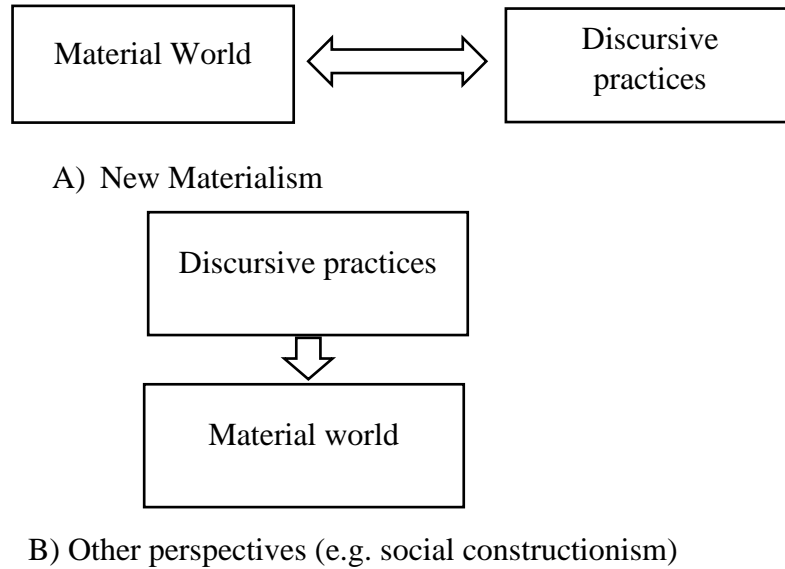


Figure 3.1. Theoretical differences on the interaction of materiality and discursive practices (Adapted from Feely, 2016, p. 869).

Recognising the inextricable relationality of the material world and discursive practices requires a more detailed analysis of a specific context (i.e. space, time, and matter). New materialism looks for more threads, similar to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) use of assemblage, to explore the relational factors that converge to materialise the sociomaterial world. This process requires the analyst to draw from a number of disciplines that have previously been explored in silos (e.g. economics, politics, geography, sciences) to form a comprehensive picture of a particular entity or area under investigation (Kirby, 2017; Feely, 2016; Barad, 2014; Braidotti, 2013a; Coole and Frost, 2010). An excellent practical example of this, looking at a context of disability and supported employment, is explained by Feely (2016, p. 874):

To elaborate, an assemblage account of why a particular service user, diagnosed as having cerebral palsy, cannot currently speak might consider:

- the biology of the particular body and its actual physical capacities (the things it can and cannot do in its current material context);
- existent communication technologies and current research into communication technologies;
- what funding is, or is not, available for this;

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- how the relevant legislation and policies enables and constrains access to speech technologies; and
- how societal discourses construct speechless subjects and the provision of expensive technologies to them.

Although this is not a full picture of the endlessly converging elements that contribute to this particular individual's embodiment, it demonstrates how relational material phenomena and discursive practices are. It also demonstrates the complexity of the lived embodiment that is experienced by an individual. Feely (2016, p. 875) thus performs a rhizomatic analysis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) to demonstrate, with the use of a diagram (represented below in Figure 3.2), how interconnected a materialist field of inquiry is.

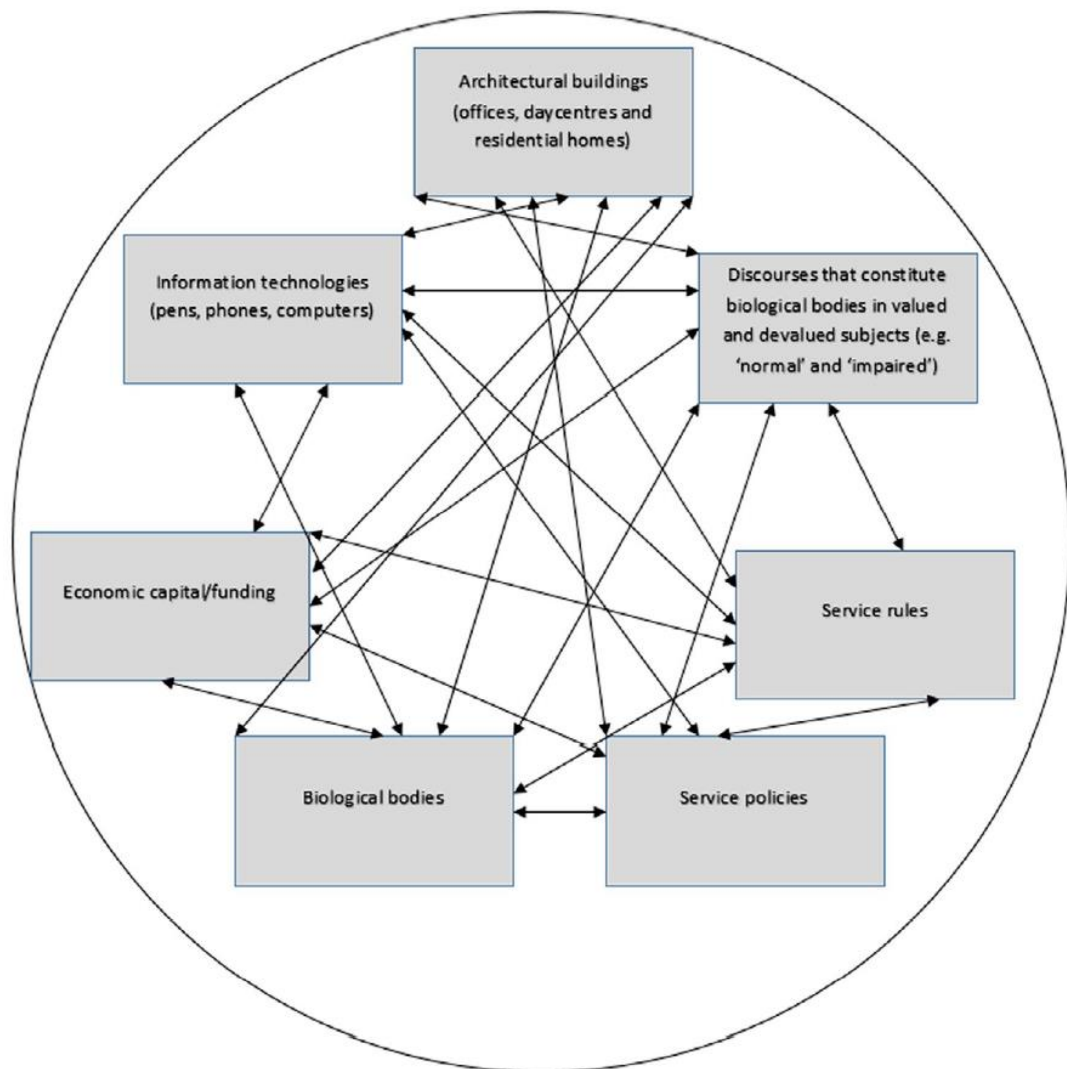


Figure 3.2: An example of a rhizomatic analysis (source: Feely, 2016, figure 3, p. 875)

Further to this, referring to the example above, those who adhere to a social constructionist epistemological perspective would not conduct such a detailed relational analysis and would

miss out important considerations that have an impact on the discourses that are presented when collecting data.

Van der Tuin and Dolphijn (2010, p. 159) posit that feminist new materialism can be used as a “tool for theory formation” as it “intersects dual oppositions in an imminent way”. A strength of this framework is “in its ability to show that agential, or the *non-innocent* nature of all matter, [which] seems to have escaped *both* modernist (positivist) and post-modernist humanist epistemologies” (van der Tuin and Dolphijn, 2010, p. 159, original emphasis). As discussed above, within this thesis I argue that some conceptualisations of gender and disability, such as the medical and social models of disability, are often inadequate as they do not consider the lived embodied experience of disability or gender in the spaces that individuals traverse. Barad (2007), however, shows how oppressive material-discursive practices enacted within particular spaces reproduce bodies as gendered, classed, or disabled. Feminist new materialism also aims to facilitate a “qualitative shifting of a dual opposition...by rethinking matter” (van der Tuin and Dolphijn, 2010, p. 164). As suggested by many feminist new materialist theorists, the return to materialism has been fuelled because “dominant discourses which have flourished under the cultural turn is now more or less exhausted” (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 6). Similar to Braidotti (2013a), Coole and Frost (2010, p. 6) argue that “the dominant constructivist orientation to social analysis is inadequate for thinking about matter, materiality, and politics in ways that do justice to the contemporary context of biopolitics and global political economy”. A feminist new materialist and posthuman analysis addresses these critiques through a relational analysis that expands beyond the human to nonhuman subjects and objects.

One of the criticisms that surround feminist new materialism, posthumanism, performativity, and posthumanist performativity is the constraints of language. There is difficulty in how the material world is given meaning through the written or spoken word (Feely, 2016; Butler, 1993). How, for example, do you communicate the ongoing mechanisms that are occurring throughout the body and mind? Van der Tuin and Dolphijn (2010, p. 165) drawing on the work of Barad, Kirby, and Braidotti stress that the qualitative shift in “the relation between matter/materiality and language, between the exterior and the interior of the body...is the abandonment of assumptions about linguisticity, and about who does the speaking/writing”. Disability or gender studies that primarily focus on either the discursive or the material therefore are “limiting the validity of [their] analyses”, as it is the entanglement of the material and discursive that affects the experience of disabled men and women as they traverse the world (Barad, 2007, p. 244). It is recognised, therefore, that

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this thesis is limited by its reliance on the written word. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the terms used throughout, such as disability, have often been used in a dualistic and binary way that have reproduced the oppressive practices within society. Whilst these limitations are irremediable as we are bound by the written or spoken word, they can be mitigated by making it explicit how particular terms are contested from their dominant and normative interpretation and use, as outlined in Chapter 1.

The aim of feminist new materialism is to challenge and disrupt binary oppositions. Specifically, this involves the reorientation of concepts that have previously been seen to be separate entities. For example, theorists such as Foucault (1980) and Butler (1990) suggest discursive practices have a one-directional effect within a passive material world, whereas theorists who use posthumanism and materialism, such as Barad (2014, 2007), Braidotti (2013a, 2016), and Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue the two are inextricable. This argument “collapses the traditional discourse/matter divide and suggests that both discursive statements and material objects are real and, moreover, they are mutually affecting” (Feely, 2016, p. 869). Nonetheless, this is easier said than done. Moss and Dyck (1999), through the critiques of other scholars’ attempts, stress the difficulty in deconstructing binary discourses without falling into the trap of reproducing these binaries.

Specific to disability, Feely (2016) argues, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari (1987), that materiality surmounts the limitations of previous theoretical attempts (e.g. cripqueer theory, poststructuralism, and critical realism) which have continued to essentialise identity formations of disability. A strength of using feminist new materialism is it not only explores what a body can or cannot do but also explores the context in which the body finds itself, which is of the utmost importance. This has been drawn upon by feminist disability studies theorists such as Garland-Thomson (2011) who uses the concepts of ‘fits’ and ‘misfits’ to show how important context is in a body’s interaction with its environment. Garland-Thomson’s (2011) use of fit and misfits is a much more apt form of analysis when discussing the embodied experience of individuals. She demonstrates that it is the relationality of the specific context that a body is situated within that results in a fit or misfit (Garland-Thomas, 2011, p. 597). For instance, an individual who is a wheelchair user, or using crutches, might have access to their place of employment through the use of a lift one day (fit), but on the next day they may be unable to access the location as that lift is broken (misfit). Garland-Thomson’s (2011, p. 598) concept of misfitting importantly applies beyond disability and is arguably a “fundamental fact of human embodiment”. This, therefore, critiques the assumption that disabled individuals automatically experience a misfit due to their

impairment. Therefore, with the use of this concept, experiences of a fit or misfit is an indication of embodiment which is *context-specific*, and therefore not solely attached to an individual. The term embodiment has been used but it is yet to be defined nor how it applies to the chosen framework for this thesis: this is discussed next.

3.2. Embodiment

A key feature of the theoretical frameworks I have drawn upon thus far is the recognition that human being are “embedded and embodied, relational, and affective subjects” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 87). The transformative aims of the thesis also align with other critical scholars such as Haraway (1991, p. 188) who stress the importance for scholars to draw upon embodied ‘situated knowledge’ to disrupt or transform “systems of knowledge and ways of seeing” (p. 191-192). Disability studies scholars for instance are increasingly recognising the need for a more in-depth analysis of how disability is experienced holistically, taking into consideration the material environment, the materiality of the body, *and* the discursive practices that surround the material environments *and* the body (Feely, 2016). Specific to organisational studies, there is a need to focus on how an individual’s impairment (the material) and how ableism (societal discourse) impacts their personal (embodied) experiences within organisations (Williams and Mavin, 2012). Williams and Mavin (2012) stress that the lack of research exploring multiple material bodies and alternative discourses beyond the embedded dominant discourses have resulted in organisational practices to be based on able-bodied norms. This reproduces the oppressive practices that exclude employees who do not fit the dominant norm(s) enacted within a particular space. Therefore, the research undertaken for this thesis has the potential to fill this gap and contribute to the nonessentialist theoretical framing of disability from a feminist new materialist and a feminist posthumanist performative perspective.

Some disability and gender theorists focus specifically on human embodiment and do not actively consider non-human or non-living influences (e.g. Ahlvik-Harju, 2016). This has been critiqued by others who have argued for a more robust analysis of how both living and non-living elements converge to constitute the experiences of embodiment (e.g. Dale and Latham, 2015; Braidotti, 2013; Tyler and Cohen, 2010; Fleming and Spicer, 2004). Moss and Dyck (2002, p. 35, original emphasis), drawing on ‘chronically ill bodies’, stress the importance of maintaining a focus on “*both* the manifestations of illness [or impairment] (as corporeal feelings) *and* the social, political, economic, and structural contexts of being ill”. Embodiment has been defined by many, but within this thesis I align with Moss and Dyck’s (2002, p. 49-50, original emphasis) definition:

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For us, embodiment refers to those *lived* spaces where bodies are constitutively located conceptually and corporeally, metaphorically and concretely, discursively and materially, being simultaneously part of bodily forms and their social constructions. Embodiment clearly is about inscription, the discourses being inscribed, and their corporeality. While living *in* and *through* space, bodies engage in material practices that produce and reproduce both the meanings of bodies, and the circumstance within which bodies exist.

Vick and Lightman (2010, p. 71), on the other hand, use the term ‘precarious bodies’ for women with episodic disabilities who, they argue, are subject to multiple fluctuations in bodily conditions, contexts and identities that are metaphorically synonymous with the precarious labour they seek and occupy. The above definition of embodiment also applies to the precarious labour many women endure as they face increasing sociomaterial demands “to sustain daily life for themselves as well as for men, children, and old people” (Haraway, 2006, p. 133). Therefore, in analysing the embodied experiences of disabled individuals or women and men by accounting for the relational affect of materiality and discursive practices this allows researchers to challenge essentialist discourses. Drawing on a feminist posthumanist performativity (discussed below), I also explore the relational factors of embodiment which accounts for space, time, and the inseparable material-discursive practices, taking account of human, non-human, inhuman, and non-living elements that impact our experiences in the world’s ongoing enfoldment (Braidotti, 2013a; Barad, 2012a; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Therefore, in analysing the embodied experiences of disabled women and men by accounting for the relational affect of materiality and discursive practices this deconstructs essentialist discourses of disability and gender. Furthermore, I add to feminist debates by analysing how masculine discourses embedded within organisational practices affect the exclusion of both disabled women and men, and how they are resisted or reproduced by employers and employees. The theorisation of embodiment is further deconstructed with a feminist posthumanist lens which is discussed next.

3.3. Feminist posthumanism

The posthuman turn, like every ‘post’ paradigm shift, seeks to move beyond, but does not disregard, the movement that preceded it. Feminist posthumanism aims to push debates beyond humanist and anti-humanist thinking; where the focus of analysis moves away from the “humanist ideal of ‘Man’ as the allegedly universal measure of all things” (Braidotti, 2019, p. 32). In light of the gaps identified in Chapters 1 and 2, feminist posthumanism provides a robust form of analysis “to study and critique the social mechanisms that support

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the construction of key identities, institutions and practices” (Braidotti, 2013a, p. 3). Braidotti (2019, p. 39), a self-professed Deleuzian feminist, argues that “there is no question that contemporary feminist theory is productivity posthuman” as it is a form of “transformative politics” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 201). Braidotti (2013a, p. 56), grounds her posthumanist theory of subjectivity on monism¹¹ and post-anthropocentrism¹². Specifically, feminist posthumanism acknowledges the existence of a nature-culture continuum, rather than a binary relationship, which recognises the relational link between the material world and discursive practices. In relation to disability and gender, nature relates to the biological elements of human bodies, and culture refers to the discourses that are attached to a particular body or place (Sherry, 2005). Braidotti (2016, p. 19) conceptualises knowing and being via a nature-culture continuum which “stresses embodied and embrained immanence and includes negotiations and interactions with bio-genetics and neuroscience, but also environmental sciences, gender, ethnicity and disability studies”.

In drawing on the insights of multiple disciplines and materialist ontology, feminist posthuman scholars overcome the social constructivist’s binary oppositions (e.g. man-woman; black-white) by “paving the way for a non-hierarchical and hence more egalitarian relationship to the species” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 23). By positioning the embodiment of human beings as non-hierarchical, the ultimate ethical political aim is that *all forms* of being human (in all its possible material reality) are seen to be ‘normal’ and not positioned as pejorative (Braidotti, 2013b, 2016, 2019). However, there are practical difficulties in breaking away from dominant material-discursive practices of ‘Man’ as it requires the collective action of individuals to disengage “themselves from the unitary identity as others, which is imposed by their opposition to the majority” (Braidotti, 2013b, p. 346). Feminist posthumanist scholars, particularly Braidotti (2006; 2011; 2013a; 2013b; 2016; 2019), also critically engage with how technological advancements benefit the neoliberal capitalism market economy in a posthuman world. For example, although technology grants different forms of access to disabled people (e.g. communication devices, speech to text software) it is often designed as a ‘one-size-fits-all’ product which means that they are not adaptable to specific needs of different bodily realities (Clinkenbeard, 2020).

Although feminist posthumanism emphasises a paradigm shift from humanism, this does not mean that humans will not, or should not, be a focus of analysis. Instead, adopting

¹¹ Monism draws on the work of philosopher Hegel and Spinoza who posits that “matter, the world and humans are not dualistic entities structured according to principles of internal or external opposition” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 56).

¹² Post-anthropocentrism “criticizes species hierarchy and human Exceptionalism” (Braidotti, 2019, p. 32).

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posthumanism requires researchers to take a step back and view the wider context to account for the myriad of intersecting elements that converge to co-create the specific context under exploration; this requires the human subject to be decentred (Barnwell, 2017). According to Braidotti (2019, p.33) the “[m]aterial, mediated posthuman subjects constitute a materially embodied and embedded community, a ‘people’, bounded by affirmative ethics”. Affirmative ethics refers to when bodies that historically have been hierarchically labelled as inferior compared to the norms of ‘Man’, are valued for their difference rather than oppressed (Braidotti, 2006, 2016). The ongoing oppressive effects of historical and cultural social norms continue to affect the embodied experiences of disabled women and men as shown in Chapters 1 and 2. By adopting a feminist posthumanist lens within this thesis the dualistic binaries that essentialise identity categories in society can be deconstructed by instead exploring the affective relations of bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces.

By adopting a posthumanist lens and drawing on research that explores how technology, politics and science have an impact on the day-to-day lived experiences of employees, it demonstrates how pervasive and complex matter is. There is a danger, however, when one chooses to exclude an emergent element of a project whilst trying to acknowledge the importance of *all* matter. As Barnell (2017, p. 37) states:

method is not an external lens that if corrected, will comprehend life as it truly is. The human cannot escape its own materiality, its own self-importance and hubris. To engage with the complexity of life we might need to include the very things that will complicate our project; we must include ourselves and our intellectual inheritance, with all its awkward and conflicting desires and the values that inform, and are informed by, our social acts of self-observation.

Feminist posthumanism, nonetheless, can “help us re-think the basic tenets of our interaction with both human and non-human agents on a planetary scale” (Braidotti, 2013a, p. 5-6).

Posthumanism has been used to theorise disability, specifically to consider the materiality of impairments and their ontological reality (Goodley, 2011, p. 116). Drawing on the data from individuals with mental health conditions, Vandekinderen and Roets (2016, p. 43) aimed to “denaturalise impairment” through a “non-dualistic understanding of nature-culture interaction”. They conclude that using feminist new materialism and posthumanism:

offers productive ways to address difference so that nature (impairment) and culture (disability) are impinging upon one another and a simple

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biological/social division can be refuted, while remaining loyal to the Marxist legacy and historical relevance of the social model [of disability].

(Vandekinderen and Roets, 2016, p. 43)

DeShong (2012), however, disregards the nature-culture continuum for a sole discursive focus. Through a dialogical perspective, looking at the use and impact of language, DeShong (2012) argues that ability cannot be thought of in a normative way in relation to disability. They instead argue the importance of a critical self-reflective perspective to describe how the condition of humanity in what, as a species, we can or cannot do, is framed by the discourses that ‘we’ as a race use. Therefore, they claim that the concept of disability and ability should be thought of as ‘dis/ability’ (DeShong, 2012, p. 274). DeShong (2012), although drawing on a posthumanist perspective, excludes the materiality of existence, the importance of the social and the cultural, and fails to account for non-human connections to the arguments he espouses, for instance how ability is used beyond the human sphere. He did, however, bring to the fore the embodied tension in relation to the ‘ability of ability’ of human subjects, namely how able one is to reach the ideal level of ability, and how it is both possible and impossible. Similar to other critical theorists discussed above, DeShong (2012) argues the need to deconstruct identity concepts, such as disability, from their current ingrained normative use. Ultimately, DeShong (2012, p. 274) aims to show how a posthumanist disability perspective critiques the “naturalization of ability”, that is to say the material (or biological) reality of ability. It is argued here, however, that DeShong’s framing of disability is flawed for its inability to demonstrate the embodied complexity of experience.

Some scholars’ have explored the link of materiality and discursive practices within organisations. For instance, Hassard et al.’s (2000), edited book *Body and Organizations* explores how the material and discursive elements of bodies and organisations impact and interact with the other. They argue that “studies of ‘society’ or ‘institutions’ assume, but rarely examine, how social practices are embodied and, in this sense, rely upon human embodiment for their enactment” (Hassard et al., 2000, p. 3). Many scholars draw on similarities between how the body and how an organisation works. Within the thesis, however, I am concerned with the misfit between body(s) and organisation(s) that reproduce oppressive practices (Garland-Thomson, 2011). Dale and Burrell (2000, p. 21) state that organisations “are seen as organisms- biological entities – which behave in particular ways in order to carry out certain functions in order to survive”. From a business perspective which has developed around capitalist and neoliberal ideals, it is ‘common sense’ for organisations to try and attain this perfectly harmonious working ideal, resulting in positive organisational

outcomes and a successful business venture. However, this fails to take into consideration the impact of individual factors, such as the free will and behaviour of employees:

Thus we see how individual people are conceptualized as members of the organization, fitting into the overall function as cogs in a machine, with no room for superfluity or different motives. We can see how this notion of equilibrium, the balance of properties within the organism/organization which keep it functioning properly, is also prevalent in the key work of biology.

(Dale and Burrell, 2000, p. 21)

How then does this concept work when considering disabled workers who may ‘disrupt’ the fluidity of the machine metaphor? Furthermore, how do organisations that have a large disabled workforce compensate for the uncertainty in production on a daily basis? What are the factors involved that impact the ‘machinery’ of an organisation that seeks to provide support for disabled workers? Although these are not the primary research questions posed at the end of Chapter 1, they are all important considerations in the theorisation of disability within an organisational context. Pullen and Rhodes (2015) explore the ethical practices within organisations that favour a disembodied and impersonal approach that has perpetuated the exclusionary discourses prevalent in many institutions. Pullen and Rhodes’ (2015, p. 160) stress that a one-size-fits-all “approach to ethics that privileges planning, predictability, control and measurement seems to forget the value of affective relations, care, compassion or any other forms of feeling that are experienced pre-reflexively through the body”. One of the key arguments of Pullen and Rhodes’ (2015) paper is how ethics within masculine organisational practices reproduce and reinforce binary distinctions. Subsequently, the dominant white able-bodied man remains in a position of power and others are not given priority and remain subjects of social injustice. One core aspect of Pullen and Rhodes’ (2015) paper that is of significance to this thesis is that organisational practices should be embodied by taking into consideration individual actors within an organisation. The dominant norms embedded within the practices discussed above affect the bodily production of gender, disability, class, ethnicity within different spatial contexts. These practices often performatively enact gender and disability as forms of oppression that perpetuate the exclusions faced of those who are deemed ‘other’ from the dominant ideal of ‘Man’. How this concept of performativity is critically engaged within organisational contexts is explored next.

3.4. Feminist Performativity

Performativity is a theoretical framework that has been drawn on by key feminists such as Butler (2015, 1993, 1990, 1988) and Barad (2014, 2007, 2003, 1996). As discussed in Chapter 1, Butler argues that gender is a performative identity. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1990) states that gender is a social construct that is distinct from a person's biological sex. She goes further to assert that gender is performative, in that gender labels are the result of historical, cultural and social behaviours that are adopted by an individual. These behaviours are inscribed with characteristics that are historically and culturally linked with a person's biological sex. Drawing on performativity, it can be argued that disability and gender identities can "neither be true nor false" (Butler, 1988, p. 528). However, as Butler states we continue to live in a world that is politically driven by universalistic dualist categories in which we define human, non-human, and inanimate objects. Although there has been some progression within western countries regarding gender identity, such as the recognition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI), this recognition has not resulted in these individuals being treated with equal standing in society (Priola et al., 2018). In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler (1993 [2011]) seeks to address some of the critiques to her earlier work entitled *Gender Trouble* (1990). In *Bodies That Matter* (1993 [2011], p. x) she aimed to "think further about the workings of heterosexual hegemony in the crafting of matters sexual and political". Although there is no direct reference to disability within *Bodies That Matter*, there are parallels that can be drawn upon when they concern a person's performative identity that is rooted within the materiality of the body. Butler (1993 [2011], p. xii) stresses that it is the power of ingrained norms of society that work in a performative manner that ultimately materialize a person's sex, which can also translate to disability identity. A critique of Butler's theory of performativity is her focus of materiality on the human body (Barad, 2007). I aim to conduct a more complex material analysis that extends beyond the human body to explore how nonhuman bodies co-constitute the performative enactment of gender and disability.

Specific to disability, Winance (2007) explores the performative effect of disability discourses within the different models of disability, indicating how the spoken word defines the relationship between the body and the world. She concludes that:

By defining the relationships between a person's body and world as causal relationships, discourse prescribes; it defines what is possible or impossible now and in the future. Furthermore, this definition of the links between body and world may or may not allow the emergence of a position for the speaker and the

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person referred to, a position that might lead to the creation of a positive identity (identification in time) and to the creation of a collective identity (identification in space). Discourse enables or disables people, making them individually or collectively capable and/or incapable. Whence not only the performativity, but also the ethical importance of handling discourse.

(Winance, 2007, p. 241)

Whereas Winance (2007) indicates that discourse can be analysed to see the performativity of language, it does not interrogate how normative disability discourses can be resisted or challenged to disrupt these performances. It does, however, demonstrate the power of discourse and the difficulties individuals have when engaging with disability discourses. Winance (2007, p. 242) argues “If discourse on disability is performative and if it defines a certain world and a certain person, we understand why people involved in disability are cautious about the words they use”. This demonstrates the ethical consequences of oppressive discursive practices that exclude bodies, but it fails to convey how material phenomena effects the performative enactment of disability. This gap is addressed in this thesis by adopting a feminist posthumanist performative lens to analysis the participants material-discursive embodied experiences in the workplace.

Recent research has explored how identities are performed within organisational contexts, for example how offices are accessorised with family pictures or qualification certificates, and how gender is portrayed in daily work practices such as administration duties. Tyler and Cohen (2010), using a performative ontology, explore how gender is spatially materialised within an organisational context (e.g. when a man and woman share an office it becomes his space not both of theirs). Tyler and Cohen (2010) confirm that organisational spaces have a material performative capability, not unlike the body. Similarly to Butler (1988) and to Dale and Burrell (2000), they argue that:

we do not simply occupy space, but rather we become ourselves in and through it. Furthermore, this spatial performativity is driven very much by our desire for recognition as viable, intelligible (organizational) subjects and hence is performed largely in accordance with its gender (and organisational) norms.

(Tyler and Cohen, 2010, p. 192)

It is questioned within this thesis, however, whether this can also be of relevance to other identities, such as disability, sexuality, and class, in relation to normative performances in organisations. Within this thesis, I therefore explore what practices affect an individual's

decision to reinforce or reject performative norms to fit within specific able-bodied and gendered spaces.

Cabantous et al. (2016, p. 198) argue that the early use of performativity within an organisational context has been subject to misunderstandings that “risk nullifying the political impact of the concept”. Drawing on a critical performative lens they suggest that there has been a disjuncture between the theoretical and practical applications of the theory. To overcome this limitation, they argue materiality needs to be brought into the theoretical framework to expand the analysis beyond the current focus on discourse. However, although Cabantous et al. (2016) claim to account for the imbrication of discourse and materiality, this is done in a very anaemic way. Despite citing Barad (2007) as a critique to Butler’s use of performativity they fail to convincingly draw on Barad’s use of materiality specifically the inseparability of materiality and discursive practices. The examples drawn upon in their paper, such as the multiple identity positions of managers of being both human and inhuman, do not go far enough to highlight the complexity of what a sociomaterial relational analysis is capable of showing. It is however recognised that they have made a much-needed step in the right direction in looking beyond the discursive rendition of performativity. The adopted feminist posthumanist performative analysis that is discussed next, conducts a more complex analysis to account for the wider historical, cultural, political, material and social factors that affect the performative enactment of bodily production. This more complex analysis addresses the limitations discussed in Cabantous et al.’s (2016) work.

3.5. Feminist posthumanist performativity

Karen Barad (1996, 2003, 2007) expands Butler’s performative theory by incorporating a posthumanist performative lens that incorporates a material focus beyond the human body. Drawing upon multiple fields of inquiry (feminism, posthumanism and performativity) that fit with the above tenets of feminist new materialism, Barad (2003, p. 808) defines posthumanist performativity as a theory that questions the “givenness of the categories of “human” or “nonhuman””. Barad (2003, p. 808, original emphasis) claims to expand Butler’s performative theory by exploring “precisely *how* discursive practice produce material bodies”. For Barad (2003, p. 826), the importance of this theoretical framework is:

“taking account of “human,” “nonhuman,” and “cyborgian” forms of agency (indeed all such material-discursive forms). This is both possible and necessary because agency is a matter of changes in the apparatuses of bodily production, and such changes take place through various intra-actions, some of which remake the boundaries that delineate the differential constitution of the “human.”

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Holding the category “human” fixed excludes an entire range of possibilities in advance, eliding important dimensions of the workings of power.”

Furthermore, feminist posthumanist performativity draws on elements of quantum physics, feminism, intersectionality, and embodiment. Barad diffractively draws on physicist Niels Bohr’s philosophical framework¹³, Michael Foucault’s (1977) use of apparatus¹⁴ (regarding power/subject), and Judith Butler’s (1993[2011]) performative account of gender to construct her ‘ontopistemological’ framework of agential realism. Barad (2007, p. 142) defines apparatus as “specific material-discursive reconfiguration of the world that do not merely emerge in time but iteratively reconfigure spacetime matter as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming”. Agency framed within Barad’s agential realist framework, and subsequently used within this thesis, is not used in its traditional humanist way in which agency is seen to be an attribute that belongs to someone or something. Instead, agency “is “doing”/“being” in its intra-activity. Agency is the enactment of iterative changes to particular practices through the dynamics of intra-activity” (Barad, 2003, p. 827). Specific to the context of this thesis, material-discursive practices that are enacted during intra-actions within the workplace (a ‘doing’) have an agentic affect on the factors within the intra-action (e.g. bodies, material-objects, sociomaterial spaces) and vice versa. Importantly, material-discursive practices that reproduce bodies as being dis/abled or wo/men can be enacted by non-organic matter’s intra-action with organic matter. For example, non-bespoke office furniture, such as a table, that cannot be adapted to the needs of the human being user can exclude bodies (a doing) as being disabled, a form of oppression, if they cannot use it in an conducive way.

Barad’s use of feminist posthumanist performativity is applied to analyse both material and immaterial matter. Therefore by drawing on a feminist posthumanist philosophical framework within this thesis it overcomes the limitations of an entirely humanist approach. Barad (2007) argues that material phenomena (e.g. the human body, institutions such as organisations, technology) and discursive practices (e.g. power, identity, capitalism, politics) are not distinct separate entities but are inextricably linked, thereby

¹³ Bohr argued that philosophy and physics were inseparable and therefore challenges both Newtonian and Cartesian ideologies. “For Bohr, things do not have inherently determinate boundaries or properties, and words do not have inherently determinate meanings. Bohr also calls into question the related Cartesian belief in the inherent distinction between subject and object, and knower and known” (Barad, 2003, p. 813).

¹⁴ Barad (2007) argues that Bohr’s use of apparatus did not go far enough, and looked to draw on Foucault’s use of apparatus. Barad acknowledged Foucault’s “insights concerning disciplinary practices and the “micro-physics of power” [and how they] have profoundly altered the ways in which power and knowledge are currently theorised. However there are crucial figures of power-knowledge practices that Foucault does not articulate, including the precise nature of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena” (Barad, 2007, p. 200)

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becoming inseparable and relational material-discursive¹⁵ practices. Specifically, Barad (2007, 2014) argues that space, time and matter are not separate entities but are in fact relational and inseparable as each co-constitutes the other: this is discursively represented by joining the three terms as ‘spacetime-matter’. For example, Barad (2007) discusses how material-discursive practices performatively enact disability and gender even before the birth of a human foetus. Barad (2007, p. 193-194) notes the agentic and ethical implications on the use of ultrasound technology to see a foetus in utero which can, in some cultures, result in a female foetus and/or a foetus with a bodily ‘abnormally’ being aborted, as some sociocultural norms see the female or impaired foetus as economically and socially ‘undesirable’ (e.g. India’s cultural preference for male children). This demonstrates how scientific and technological developments have agency and become entangled with human bodies - they enact boundary-making material-discursive practices - to affect the materialisation of identities such as disability and gender.

Barad (2007, p. 183) states that “[i]n an agential realist account, discursive practices are not human-based activities but specific material (re)configurings of the world through which boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted”. Barad (2003, 2007) argues that discursive practices and materiality are co-constituted and cannot be separated which, as discussed previously, is a critique of theoretical frameworks that argue the separability of the two (although many suggest there is a link or overlap). Other theorists adopt similar arguments on how co-constitutive elements combine to impact/create embodied experiences (see Moss and Dyck, 2002). Shildrick (2015) draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) use of assemblage, which explores how embodiment is not influenced by “just technological aspects such as prostheses but an array of materials, locations, and spaces that might be called technics” (Shildrick, 2015, p. 17-8). Similar to Barad, Shildrick (2015, p. 18) explicitly states that her use of technics refers to:

the entangled and co-constitutive interrelations between technologies, “users”, and the sociocultural context.... Moreover, it is not simply material entities that come together in technics, but a heterogeneous array of discursive elements and practices that encompass, *without privileging any one modality* [added emphasis], the affective, the political, the institutional, and the biological. All are linked together, cross over, and become more or less mutually – albeit provisionally- incorporated in unpredictable assemblages that figure both the

¹⁵ The inseparability is denoted by the joining of material and discursive with a hyphen to become material-discursive.

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affirmation of becoming-otherwise *and* [original emphasis] the potential emergence of new organizations of power.

Thus one's lived embodiment is the result of multiple elements and practices, both material and discursive, which are mutually affective.

Although not explicitly discussed within Barad's work, a feminist posthumanist performative lens theoretically expands the aforementioned theory of intersectionality, through assessing how the entanglement of materiality and discursive practices affect the oppression of particular bodies (e.g. Weasel, 2016). It allows for intra-acting material-discursive practices to be accounted for in understanding oppression and discrimination. For example, during a job interview an applicant's gender, disability, class, sexuality, and race identity markers intersect with visual aesthetics of matter (age, weight, attractiveness, and dress). These elements intra-act with the historic and cultural discourses of privilege and oppression surrounding each of these identity categories, along with the current political and organisational discourses. Furthermore, the intra-action of the interviewees body with the physical space where the interview takes place will intra-act with the aforementioned factors, which will affect the outcome of the interview. All these material-discursive practices intra-act on varying levels, creating infinite possibilities of becoming (Barad, 2012b). For example, an employer may not believe that a white working-class physically disabled applicant will be a good fit because they draw upon oppressive historical and social norms that reinforce that this individual is not an 'ideal' worker (i.e. not male, middle-class and able-bodied). They may also draw upon material factors such as how their workspace will need altered to accommodate their physical disability which will cost the organisation money (Braidotti, 2018). The use of intersectionality to explore experiences of oppression within a social constructionist ontological paradigm however does not go far enough to challenge the issues identified in the mainstream normative definitions of disability as discussed in Chapter 1. Within this thesis, there is a shared agreement with other feminist new materialist scholars that:

retaining intersectionality primarily as an artifact of social construction, and ignoring the co-construction of material, embodied manifestations of intersectional identities, limits theory and constrains efforts to combat the very intertwined oppressions and injustices that intersectionality brings to light (Weasel, 2016, p. 105).

Therefore, by including an intersectional axes when conceptualising and interrogating sociomaterial intra-actions that affect the health and wellbeing of human beings, it is not

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only of interest to feminist new materialist scholars but can pave the way for social change (Weasel, 2016).

Specific to disability, Moss and Dyck (1999, 2002) also call for a material-discursive theorisation of disability, although they refer to chronically ill or diseased material bodies to avoid invoking disability dualistic thinking. They argue that the chronically ill women in their study were not, and could not, separate the material and the discursive in relation to their bodies. They report that:

[t]he issue of the simultaneous embodiment of discourse and materiality frames our interpretation of women's experiences of chronic illness. *Rather than privileging one over the other* in attempting to grasp this coexistence, we want to concentrate on the *synchronous embodiment of discursive and material bodies*.

(Moss and Dyck, 1999, p. 374, added emphasis).

Drawing on this co-constitutive theorisation of disability, it contests the social and medical model of disability by recognising the inseparability and relationality of the material (i.e. impairment effects) and the discursive elements (disability as a form of oppression) as espoused in the social relational model of disability. This entails accounting for the materiality of the physical body (and the physical world), and the discursive practices, such as what disease they are biomedically diagnosed with and what practices this identity evokes. However, Moss and Dyck (1999) also recognise their use of materiality is flawed as they chose to look at a specific concept of materiality (biomedicine) at the exclusion of others (e.g. capitalism and state authority): this exclusion is critiqued by a posthumanist performative theoretical model of disability as discussed above. Moss and Dyck (1999) also provide some insight into the way that illness and disease, which is normatively known as impairment, is constituted. They also explored the research respondents *material body* (e.g. their biological symptoms), and their *discursive body* where the women would either accept, contest, and/or resist oppressive normative discourses of a disability. However, although they claim to avoid falling into dualistic linguistics, they fail to provide a holistic analysis as they adopt a humanist stance. They acknowledge however that they exclude vital parts of the women's lives (such as biopolitics, geopolitics, capitalism) that would demonstrate the complexity of their lived embodiment: this therefore limits the strength of their findings.

Barad's (2007) relational 'ontoepistemological' framework destabilises the binary of disabled and able-bodied. She argues that:

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[t]he luxury of taking for granted the nature of the body as it negotiates a world constructed specifically with an image of “normal” embodiment in mind is enabled by the privileges of ableism. It is when the body doesn’t work – when the body “breaks down” – that such presupposition surface. It is often only when things stop working that the apparatus [e.g. the body, a wheelchair] is first noticed.

(Barad, 2007. p. 158)

Barad (2007, p. 158) claims that it “becomes clear that “able-bodiedness” is not a natural state of being but a specific form of embodiment that is co-constituted through the boundary making practices that distinguish “able-bodied” from “disabled””. By framing the materiality of bodies as a phenomena (i.e. a form of embodiment) and not as subject/objects she shifts the focus of identity as binary to a more intimate and relational intra-action between the two forms of embodiment: “being able-bodied means being in a prosthetic relationship with the “disabled”” which able-bodied individuals depend on for their “very existence” (Barad, 2007, p. 158). Similarly, feminist new materialists argue that there is no homogeneous form of human being (i.e. no form of (ab)normality) and thus there are no homogenous categories of human. For example, Roy and Subramaniam (2016) argue that if there is no universal woman then there can be no universal biological body or matter. Nor, according to feminist materialist disability scholars, can we decontextualize bodies as they are situated within historical and cultural sociomaterial contexts which shape the material-discursive body through affective practices (Thomas, 1999; Garland-Thomson, 2011). Consequently, by adopting this proposition I argue here that there can be no binary of bodily identities. Although, as discussed above, the difficulty lies in disrupting the dominant social norms that continue to have a sociocultural hold that reinforce and reproduce binary distinctions (Thomas, 1999).

While it is argued that feminist new materialism and Barad’s agential realism are theoretical tools capable of disrupting the dualistic nature of disability and gender, this has been challenged by other scholars. Sullivan (2012, p. 310), for example, argues that materialism and agential realism just reinvent these binaries as natural divides, e.g. “culture/nature, human/animal, representation/reality”. This, however, is far too simplistic of a critique. More recent challenges further echo that Barad’s and others’ theorisation may, in fact, reinforce the binaries it seeks to deconstruct. Braunmühl (2018, p. 228) argues that Barad’s conceptualisation of agential realism “privileges mind or matter in such a way that

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one pole is understood reductively in terms of the other”. She inaccurately suggests, however, that this theoretical framework privileges one pole of a gender dualism, and

regardless of whether we efface gendered distinctions in terms that privilege the ‘masculine’ *or* the ‘feminine’ side of a given duality in a manner that reifies either terms as superior or intrinsically more relevant, will have failed truly to transcend the relevant duality.

(Braunmühl, 2018, p. 229)

The new materialists she critiques, many of whose work is drawn upon in this review, espouse the opposite. Feminist new materialists and posthumanist performative scholars, such as Barad (2011; 2007; 2003) and Braidotti (2013), argue that posthumanism and performativity move away from a humanist, dualist and binary-based perspective to a sociomaterial and relational model. Barad (2011, p. 124), for example, states: “what is needed then is a way of thinking about the nature of differentiating that is not derivative of some fixed notion of identity or even a fixed spacing”. Braunmühl (2018) reinforces that gender identity is fixed onto or within bodies. As is discussed below, even scholars who argue the all-encompassing importance of (all) matter use terminology that is normatively associated with a binary hierarchy, however, they stress that no element/factors are privileged over the other. There is no privileging of any pole of a normative dualism.

Barad (2003, p. 812) explicitly discusses how agential realism ontologically breaks away from dualisms by rejecting:

the metaphysics of relata, of “words” and “things.” On an agential realist account, it is once again possible to acknowledge nature, the body, and materiality in the fullness of their becoming without resorting to the optics of transparency or opacity, the geometries of absolute exteriority or interiority, and the theorization of the human as either pure cause or pure effect while at the same time remaining resolutely accountable for the role “we” play in the intertwined practices of knowing and becoming.

It is argued here that Braunmühl’s (2018) critique is flawed. She posits that it is only matter which is capable of experiencing, and thus able to endure vulnerability, should be the focus of new materialist research which seeks to deconstruct dualisms. For example, she states that:

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to feel responsible or accountable to what can be affected ontologically *but not experientially* -for instance, when being destroyed- seems to me to involve a projection of the said feature of subjectivity onto objects, understood along the lines as what *does not care, even about 'its own' becoming or unbecoming*.

(Braunmühl, 2018, p. 230, added emphasis).

She here challenges the very essence of the framework and tries to limit the rationale for research on matter to be within a humanist or living remit. What Braunmühl's (2018) inadvertently does is reinforce the binary of human and nonhuman, or living and non-living, matter, with the sentient matter being hierarchically positioned as superior to nonhuman/non-living agentic matter. This falls into the "pitfall of positioning everything in relation to the human" (Barad, 2011, p. 127). However, you only have to consider the impact of global warming to see how non-sentient matter (i.e. the natural elements of the planet) directly impacts most of the living and sentient beings (making them vulnerable) on the planet. To disregard non-living or inanimate matter as having no agentic relevance (of what is possible *not human intention or subjectivity*) reduces the scope and impact of inquiry within the tenets of new materialism. The entanglement and assemblages of the material and the discursive, and nature and culture, is fundamental to the theorisation of posthuman performative practices; this must include the observation of how all matter intra-acts and not just a sole focus on human or sentient beings.

A feminist posthumanist performativity perspective allows for the complex, co-constituted, and ever enfolding elements of the world to be considered: the frame of reference is more encompassing of the world's elements in their ongoing becoming and not favouring one element over the other. A posthumanist performative perspective revolves around the interlocking and ever-evolving processes of the "world's ongoing intra-active becoming and non-becoming" (Barad, 2010, p. 265). Barad (2003, p. 808) explicitly states that her rendition of performativity is "one that incorporates important material and discursive, social and scientific, human and nonhuman, and natural and cultural factors". Barad implores readers to understand the inseparable and relational, or co-constituted workings of her perspective. What Barad intends to convey in her complex but insightful framework is the entanglement of matter such as materiality (in all its forms), discursive practices, time and space. For the purpose of this thesis, there are numerous material-discursive elements that combine to form the research apparatus: my body and mind intra-act within and through one another when observing what I see in the field, and while conducting interviews. Furthermore, the objects with which I intra-act with such as the car

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used to get to the organisation, pens, paper and mobile phone that were used to record fieldnotes (noting and accounting the historical development of these items), the computer for writing up field notes and the computer software used to analyse data. This is by no means an exhaustive list but demonstrates the interplay of living and non-living, human and non-human matter that has played a part in this research project.

Another term that Barad (2010, p. 261, original emphasis) uses is ‘phenomena’ which refers to “*material entanglements enfolded and threaded through the spacetime mattering of the universe*”. Thus disability and gender performatively come into being during specific material-discursive intra-actions between bodies (e.g. co-workers), material objects (e.g. technology, machines) and sociomaterial spaces (e.g. workplace), and the material-discursive practices (e.g. capitalist market economy, work productivity surveillance) enacted during these intra-actions. These intra-actions of bodily production (re)produce social norms that exclude bodies for their ‘difference’ and deviation from the norm which enact disability and gender as forms of oppression. As Barad (2003, p. 814, original emphasis) explains:

[t]his relational ontology is the basis for my posthumanist performative account of the production of material bodies. This account refuses the representationalist fixation on “words” and “things” and the problematic of their relationality, advocating instead *a causal relationship between specific exclusionary practices embodied as specific material configurations of the world* (i.e., discursive practices/(con)figurations rather than “words”) *and specific material phenomena* (i.e., relations rather than “things”). This causal relationship between the apparatuses of bodily production and the phenomena produced is one of “agential intra-action”.

According to this theory, there are infinite possibilities of knowing and being (or becoming) as each human’s intelligibility of the world is co-constituted by material-discursive practices, which have no boundary limit, that result in specific agential intra-actions. It challenges notions of a normative collective identity in that it recognises there are a manifold of converging material-discursive practices that create instances of knowing and being that are subject to change over time and space. To give a working example: Jane, who has one hand, works with Joe, Fred, and Susan and she uses specific modified equipment inside a manufacturing workshop. This workshop is governed by specific health and safety protocols and is influenced by politics and events in the real world. All this affects Jane’s work experience. Her age, gender, ethnicity, social-class and work performance will provoke different responses from each of her co-workers and employers. They may draw upon, or

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not, discriminatory attitudes such as ableism, ageism, and/or sexism which will affect how they interpret her performance and her eligibility to belong in the work environment. Each response is also governed by her colleagues' history and exposure to knowledge, awareness and intra-action with other people and places.

Specific to disability, Garland-Thomson's (2011) performative use of fits and misfits, in place of a discussion on ability and disability, allows for the material-discursive elements to come to the fore without reifying representationalist and essentialist discourses. While Barad (2007) refers to 'intra-active becoming' Garland-Thomas has coined the term 'interactive dynamism' to refer to the same process. Garland-Thomson (2011, p. 592) states that:

[s]uch becoming understands the fundamental units of being not as words and things or subjects and objects, but as dynamic phenomena produced through entangled and shifting forms of agency inherent in all materiality. Misfitting as an explanatory concept lets us think through a particular aspect of world-making involved in material-discursive becoming.

Referring to the example given above, Jane is able to perform her job role as a piece of equipment has been made so that she can perform a specific action required to complete a needed task. With the use of this equipment Jane experiences a 'fit', however, if this equipment breaks down then she will experience a 'misfit' as she will no longer be able to perform her job role without the aid of the equipment. This draws on the posthuman subject in that with technological advancements we are able to transform how beings (including, human, animal and other organic matter) can be aided with the use of (non)organic matter, which is transformed by humans' and non-humans' intra-action with, and manipulation of, the material world.

The difficulty in adopting a feminist posthumanist performative lens, however, is the level of specificity that is needed in order to be able to account for the present intra-actions within the data. Scholars such as Mauthner (2017, p. 278) stress that researchers, such as myself, who adopt specific methods of data collection need to be aware of their non-innocent nature: "methods can never be neutral for they necessarily enact themselves and the world in specific metaphysical-humanist representationalist/posthumanist performativity-figurations". It therefore requires that I specify "the metaphysical assumptions that are discursively embodied and enacted in the intra-active co-constitution of the "agencies of observation" and...[the] "objects of observations". This metaphysical specificity is how the material nature of discursive practice help constitute the world" (Mauthner, 2017, p. 263).

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This will be discussed in the next chapter as I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the methods of data collection used within this project.

3.6. Summary

This chapter has introduced and critically appraised feminist new materialism (Coole and Frost, 2010), posthumanism (Braidotti, 2013a), performativity (Butler, 1993), embodiment (Moss and Dyck, 2002) and feminist posthumanist performativity (Barad, 2007). Specifically, this chapter has considered how and in what way each of these theoretical frameworks approaches theorising disability and has identified the strengths and weaknesses of each. In light of the critical discussion of these frameworks, this thesis draws on multiple elements from different critical theoretical frameworks. The thesis therefore aligns with the overall transformative aims of feminism and critical disability studies as they have the similar aim of deconstructing the normative and pejorative minority identities of disability and gender.

A feminist posthumanist performative perspective allows for a critical reflection of the relationality of material *and* discursive practices, such as geopolitics, biopolitics, science, posthumanism, technology. This framework therefore challenges essentialist and normative discourses of disability and gender that reproduce practices of oppression. Importantly, although this thesis challenges the normative discourses of both disability and gender within a specific context, a feminist posthumanist performative perspective does not favour one pole of a binary (i.e. women) over the other (i.e. men). Notably, the framework requires theorists to account for the specific context, both materially and discursively, in which individuals find themselves. Within this thesis however, the concepts of disability and gender are used as a starting point which is then expanded to encapsulate (recognising linguistic limitations) the relevant and intersecting material-discursive agential cuts that coalesce within the observable phenomenon investigated (i.e. employment experiences within a sheltered workshop and mainstream employment). To the best of my knowledge there has been no prior posthumanist performative framing of disability and gender within varied organisational contexts (i.e. sheltered employment and mainstream) in the geopolitical context of the UK and more broadly within western countries.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter discusses both the methodological approach used for this research project and how the data from two types of employment were collected and analysed. First the philosophical framework that underpins this thesis is outlined. The second and third sections discuss the methods adopted for the data collection within the two employment contexts. The fourth section discusses the ethical considerations of the project. The final section discusses the methods used to analyse the data (thematic analysis) and how the themes emerged from the analysis.

4.1. Philosophical position: ontology and epistemology

When conducting academic research, the chosen ontological and epistemological positions form the philosophical framework that underpins the project. *Ontology* refers to the philosophical assumptions on what reality is. Some philosophers (e.g. positivists) argue that reality is objective and independent of the living inhabitants that occupy a given space. On the other hand, other scholars (e.g. social constructivists) argue that reality is subjective and dependent on the point of view of the observer and interactions with others (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). *Epistemology* refers to a set of arguments a researcher has on the best way(s) to inquire into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Specifically, epistemology relates to “what is knowing?” “what is the known?” and “what is knowledge?” (Given, 2008, p. 265). How researchers inquire about what is known depends on their objective and/or subjective ontological positioning. Over time and across intellectual disciplines there have been periods when a particular philosophical paradigm has been dominant. The chosen paradigm can be influenced by a number of factors including: type of data collected (qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method); chosen discipline (i.e. sciences, humanities or social sciences); and a researcher’s geographical location and the dominant philosophical approach in the region (Global north: USA; Canada; Europe; Global south: South America, Asia, Middle East etc).

The chosen ontological position has “profound implications on how researchers approach the phenomena they purport to study” (Al-Almoudi and O’Mahoney, 2016, p. 15). A researcher’s chosen epistemology should be linked with their ontological position as both will influence the theory chosen and the level of involvement they have with the research subjects and/or objects (Bengtsson, 2013). One epistemological position aligned with an *objective* ontological paradigm is *positivism*. Positivism argues reality is made up of objective physical things that exist independently of people’s perceptions of them.

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Furthermore, positivists argue that entities are “governed by universal laws that are expressed in terms of event regularities” (Al-Almoudi and O’Mahoney, 2016, p. 17). The research method often adopted by positivists consists of strictly controlled laboratory experiments. These are designed to assess the cause and effect of an independent variable on the dependent variables which are subject to high levels of validity and reliability. There has, however, been a paradigm shift within some of the social sciences, particularly sociological and anthropological based subjects (e.g. organisational studies and HRM), to a *subjective* ontology which directly challenges the ontological assumptions of positivism. Social constructionism argues that knowledge, knowing and the known are constructed through human interaction (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 58; Burr, 2015). This subjective framework further argues that behaviours, thoughts, opinions and attitudes of participants are influenced by culture, society, and individuality (Williamson, 2006). Researchers who adopt this position see “themselves as co-constructors and co-interpreters of the meaning(s) of organisational events along with situational members, reflecting on their own roles in shaping those interpretations” (Yanow et al., 2012, p. 332-3). Social constructivists mainly collect qualitative data “to obtain thick description and as much detailed information as possible about people’s lives” (Snape and Spencer, 2009, p. 21). However, it is sometimes argued that this form of data collection and subsequent qualitative analysis is too subjective. As a result the data is not subject to assessments of validity and reliability, as it relies heavily on the quality of the data collected and the researcher’s interpretation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

There are, however, many ontological and epistemological paradigms that sit between positivism and constructionism, such as *realism* or *critical realism*. There are different types of realism. These include: *traditional realism* that views reality, or the world, as “concrete and external [objective], and that science can only progress through observations that gave direct correspondence to the phenomena being investigated” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 61). *Transcendental realism* distinguishes between the purported areas of study (i.e. the law of physics), which are objective, and the theories or evidence reported by researchers, which are subject to interpretation. *Internal realism*, however, focuses more on the observation of reality. Specifically it explores how the phenomena under observation are determined, whilst recognising the impact that the observation technique has on the observed object/subject (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Internal realists thus recognise that there is no objective position for the observers – this differs from the arguments of traditional realists above. There is also a critical stream of relativism, termed *critical realism*, which incorporates both realist (objective) and social

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constructionist (subjective) elements within ontological arguments as a compromise between the two positions. Critical realism “recognizes social conditions (such as class or wealth) as having real consequences whether or not they are observed and labelled by social scientists; but it also recognises that concepts are human constructions” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 62).

The aforementioned ontological and epistemological paradigms each have their own positionings on what reality is, what is known and knowledge, and how to go about measuring reality and what is known. However, this thesis argues that ontology and epistemology, as discussed above, are boundary-making practices which bound reality and knowledge within a set parameter, defining explicitly what reality and knowledge is and is not. This constrains knowing and being “due to the representationalist practices it gives rise to” (Mauthner, 2018, p. 4). To move beyond the essentialist framing of being and knowing, then, requires the adoption of an alternative philosophical framework.

4.1.1. Agential Realism

Within this thesis I do not adhere to one of the dominant ontological and epistemological paradigms (e.g. positivism or social constructionism) outlined above. Instead, I adopt Karen Barad’s (2007, p. 43) ‘ontoepistemological’ framework “agential realism” which:

rejects the notion of a correspondence relation between words and things and offers instead a causal explanation of how discursive practices are related to material phenomena. It does so by shifting the focus from the nature of representations (scientific or other) to the nature of discursive practices (including technoscientific ones), leaving in its wake the entire irrelevant debate between traditional forms of realism and social constructivism.

(Barad, 2007, p. 44-45).

I therefore *do not separate* the concepts, or boundaries, which are often presented as separate within ontological and epistemological debates in academic research. Barad’s concept of materiality “implies a non-essentialist ontological understanding of materiality” (Mauthner, 2018, p. 2). Barad (1996, p. 173), drawing on the early philosophical work of quantum physicist Niels Bohr, argued that a new philosophical position was needed in recognition that “method, measurement, description, interpretation, epistemology, and ontology are not separable considerations”. Agential realism, therefore, argues that within a specified context objects cannot be separated from agencies of observation. Consequently, Barad’s concept of

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realism, although similar to critical realism, differs from the classical concepts discussed above in that:

[a]gential realism relies on a non-classic ontology. The material is not fixed and prior to discursive signification...*realism is not about representations of an independent reality but about the real consequences, interventions, creative possibilities, and responsibilities of intra-acting within the world.*

(Barad, 1996, p. 188, original emphasis).

Importantly, agential realism is an appropriate ‘ontoepistemological’ framework for this thesis as it challenges essentialist and normative understandings of concepts such as disability and gender. It shifts “knowledge-making practices from a *representationalist* to a *performative* understanding” (Mauthner, 2018, p. 3, original emphasis). A performative understanding does not intend to discover identities nor provide interpretations of identity constructions. Instead agential realism looks at how research practices (and other material-discursive practices) “help *constitute* specific kinds of identities (humans, animals, machines) as well as specific categories of human identities (men, women, White, Asian, Black, working-class, middle-class, and so on)” (Mauthner, 2018, p. 3). Barad states that:

agential realism provides an account of the simultaneously material and cultural nature of the ontology of the world...There is no opposition here between materiality and social construction: constructedness does not deny materiality. *The materiality of the body is not dissipated by its constructedness since reality is constituted by the “between”, the inseparability of nature-culture / world-word / physical-conceptual / material-discursive.* Culture does not displace or replace nature, but neither do things exist outside of culture. Phenomena are material-cultural be-in’s.

(Barad, 1996, p. 181, original emphasis)

Agential realism thus challenges positivist assumptions that a researcher can observe and obtain facts that exist independent to human beings and the reach of social constructionism (Barad, 1996). Regarding the latter, scholars have argued: “that the dominant constructivist orientation to social analysis is inadequate for thinking about matter, materiality, and politics in ways that do justice to the contemporary context of biopolitics and global political economy” (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 6). On the contrary, as Barad (1996, p. 186) states, “agential realism provides us with a form of realism that is compatible with social constructivism. Agential realism is a form of social constructivism that is not relativist, does

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not reduce knowledge to power plays or language, and does not reject objectivity”. To fully account for the material and the discursive elements of this project it is therefore vital that I understand their inseparability. For instance, this study explores how and in what way disability and gender are performatively enacted during *intra-actions* (different from interact to denote the inseparability of the material and discursive) within and between other bodies, material objects and the sociomaterial environment. The wider factors such as politics, historical and cultural social norms, and the material-discursive practices enacted during these intra-actions are also explored as to how they affect the bodily production of disabled women and men. By contrast, if I was to adopt a social constructionist epistemology, then the material aspects of this study would not be viewed as vital to understanding knowing and being.

To answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 two empirical studies were carried out. Study one was an ethnographic study based within a UK, charity-based manufacturing sheltered workshop that provides employment to disabled people. Study two was also a qualitative study, albeit smaller in scope, where semi-structured interviews were held with women and men with a self-defined disability, who worked in mainstream employment. The research participants were from a range of ages, professions and had a range of impairments. Each study is discussed separately below, presenting the method of data collection with a critical reflection on how the methodology is appropriate to answer the research questions.

4.2. Study one: Ethnographic participant observations and semi-structured interviews in sheltered employment.

Study one was an ethnographic study which employed qualitative participant observations and semi-structured interviews in a small charity-based sheltered workshop in the UK (hereafter known as the pseudonym Able-Industries). Able-Industries is a manufacturing workshop which primarily accepts contracts from larger retail companies to package their products (e.g. shoe insoles) to be sold in supermarkets or by online retailers. Generally, items were pre-made outside of the workshop and required packaging for being sold in stores, but there were some products made onsite, for example, chimney balloons and fruit and vegetable life extender disks.

4.2.1. Phase one: ethnographic research

Ethnographic research is “the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations, and communities” (Reeves et al., 2008, p. 1).

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Conducting ethnographic research is considered crucial to gain an insider's perspective of the world that research participants live in (Fetterman, 2010; Taylor, 2010; Ritchie, 2009; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Despite the importance of ethnographic research and its use in many disciplines, its definition continues to be debated and misused. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 1) discuss the different ways that ethnography can be defined and how the term can be confused with similar methods, such as case studies or qualitative research. Other authors, such as Clair (2003, p. 3), succinctly define ethnographic research as "the writing of culture". Within the literature there is a consensus that the roots of ethnographic research lie in anthropology, where early research explored cultures outside of western societies (Madison, 2012; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Clair, 2003). For this research project I adopted an affective ethnographic approach which is a "a style of practice that acknowledges that all elements – texts, actors, materialities, languages, agencies – are already entangled in complex ways and that they should be read in their intra-action, through one another, as data in motion/data that moves" (Gherardi, 2019, p. 742). These ethnographic methods formed part of the wider organisational research study where the data I collected was combined with semi-structured interviews. The observations allowed me to understand the day-to-day experiences at the workshop (Taylor, 2010), to note how individuals intra-acted with other bodies and with other material objects. The interviews allowed for a more in-depth exploration of individuals' experiences told from their own point of view. As a result I had a thorough understanding of the responses given during interviews, and I asked questions about events I witnessed during the interview as a way of triangulating my understanding (Hammersley, 2008).

There were various elements to be considered when I was planning the ethnographic research, such as the type of data needed, the method of data collection, my role and positionality as a researcher, and the analysis chosen to interpret the data, all of which are influenced by my ontological and epistemological assumptions outlined above. However, ethnographic research is flexible, allowing for my chosen philosophical position to shape the research methodology. According to Yanow et al., (2012, p. 332) "[m]ethodologically speaking, ethnographic research can be informed by either realist-objectivist or constructed-interpretivist approaches". A qualitative ethnographic research methodology therefore accommodates a wide range of philosophical positionings to gain an insider's perspective of the chosen research participants' social world (Clair, 2003). To answer the research questions, ethnographic research was appropriate as I was able to immerse myself within the sociomaterial world of the research participants to experience and observe the multiple intra-

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acting material-discursive practices specific to the research context; it also aligns with the ‘ontoeπισtemological’ position outlined above. I was able to see the personal experiences of those employed in the workshop and experience it for myself. Therefore, rather than “being there” I was “being with” or “being in-between” others (Gherardi, 2019, p. 745).

Participant observation is the most common method of conducting ethnographic research (Brannan and Oultram, 2012, p. 297). However, there are various methods along the continuum of ethnographic research: complete immersion where the researcher lives or works in the same environment as participants; observation and interviews where the researcher is within the environment but not entirely based there; and observation only. Further to this, the role of the researcher can be either covert (unknown) or overt (known) (see Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). I conducted an overt study with participant observations and interviews conducted when onsite. It was agreed with the organisation that I would work alongside the participants and my role as a researcher would be known to all individuals within the work environment. An overt study was paramount to the aims of the project as “without negotiation and dialogue as well as a concern for research subjects and their views” there can be “no research” (Sörensson and Kalman, 2018, p. 707).

Ethnographic participant observations were chosen as the best method to document the experiences of people and it is “only by establishing long-term relationships based on trust can one begin to ask provocative personal questions, and expect thoughtful, serious answers” (Bourgois, 2010, p. 16). Therefore, this approach allowed me as the researcher to witness, feel, and interpret real-time events and to follow them up with additional questioning at the time or during subsequent interviews. This directly impacted the data collected, as it was noticeable that the employees of Able-Industries began to trust me and our intra-actions became more comfortable at around four weeks (Sörensson and Kalman, 2018). The everyday experiences, which are salient to answering the research questions, would have been missed or inaccessible if I was to use other forms of data collection, such as only conducting interviews or a survey. The participant observations enabled me to get to know the research participants, learn about their daily job roles, and if/how their impairment impacted their day-to-day experience of employment at Able-Industries (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). All of which were vital to answer the research questions.

Obtaining full access to the research environment once situated can also be difficult. Scholars have noted how restricted access can limit the collection of data, making a true reflection of the environment impossible (Reeves, 2010). Due to conducting participant observations that required me to work on the shop floor with the majority of the workers, it

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is recognised that there were aspects of the workplace that were missed during observations. I personally did not extensively witness the education training the workshop offered, nor the daily work practices in the administrative offices, as this often occurred in a closed room inaccessible to many of the workers. Some of this information was gleaned over time, for example when working in the canteen there were conversations occurring around me relating to the office work or the management team's agenda.

One of the strengths of ethnographic research is the recording of a vast amount of rich data that produces situated knowledge within a particular social context (Taylor, 2010). The process of recording the large volume of data at Able-Industries was both enjoyable and informative, but it was also a challenge. After the first day of observations, when attempting to write up the notes, I realised that it was impossible to recall six hours of interaction in perfect detail (without any notes). To remedy this, I decided to make brief notes to trigger my memory once I returned home to write up my field notes. This meant that I could fully immerse myself in the culture of the work environment (Mulhall, 2003). Immersion was important to understand the participants' experiences within the social context (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). However, workers appeared to be suspicious that I was taking notes during the break and lunch, and I feared this would affect their behaviour (Wolfinger, 2002). Consequently, I adapted my note-taking procedure to writing notes on my mobile phone (password protected) in order to blend in (Hein et al., 2011), as most people were using their mobile phones during their breaks. From then on there were not any issues with my notetaking. These notes then allowed me to write a comprehensive summary of the day's fieldwork observations once I went back home (Wolfinger, 2002) (see Appendix 1 for an extract of field notes).

A further benefit of conducting a longitudinal ethnography (over 11 months) was not only the development of rapport but also being able to witness first-hand the changes in the way that Able-Industries dealt with the day-to-day events. This included witnessing crises, procedural changes, and employee changes (Langley and Strensaker, 2012). However, there are challenges with conducting longitudinal organisational research in that "organisational members will sometimes ask for input and advice and some may even treat academics like consultants, expecting solutions and answers" (Langley and Strensaker, 2012, p. 153). This situation arose a number of times during the participant observations. For instance members of the management team requested the following: advice on a specific matter or asked me to carry out a survey; to ask all shop floor workers a question about an event; to conduct health and safety assessments; and to take part in health and safety training. At times, I was given

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more power and status by the management team, for example when they asked me to watch people and see if they needed anything when the management team or team leaders left the room. This caused some confusion as to my role within the organisation as I was seen by many as more than just a volunteer. As a result, some of the shop floor workers treated me as a member of staff and began asking me questions or asked me to provide support in some capacity. However, the process of seeing some of the behaviours from multiple perspectives (i.e. shop floor workers, admin workers, and the management team) was invaluable to my understanding of the research context and exposed “the entanglements of culture with power” (Yanow et al., 2012, p. 335). There were also comments from the shop floor staff, team leaders and the management team that I would be a good member of staff and should work there; this was often said in jest but demonstrated that a good level of rapport had been developed.

4.2.2. Organisation selection and recruitment

Prior to data collection, a number of alternative types of employment or support services were considered. Those initially reviewed were assessed on the type of support and services they offered to disabled women and men to develop employment-related skills to facilitate entry to employment. On researching their aims and objectives some of the services, which primarily offered social networking and entertainment-based activities, were discounted as not being sufficiently employment-related. Able-Industries was chosen as the most appropriate site for the ethnographic study as it was an alternative type of employment to mainstream employment. On their website Able-Industries were clear that their objective was to support disabled people to gain employment-related skills and, where possible, to support their transition to mainstream employment. On further researching the organisation it was decided that this would be an apt case study as it is a manufacturing workshop, a type of environment which is inherently gendered (Acker, 2012, 2006). The organisation also appeared to cater to women and men with lower employment skills and education levels, which added further tenets of identity to explore. On establishing contact with the organisation to negotiate access it became clear that Able-Industries was an ideal case study as it played an important role in the local community, situated somewhere between mainstream employment and social welfare. This contrast afforded me the opportunity to see how gender, disability, and work were experienced in an environment that caters specifically to disabled people. It was important to see how the participants in the sheltered workshop engaged with the concept of disability in the workplace. Furthermore, how the

material-discursive practice within the workshop reinforced or disrupted disability and gender as forms of oppression.

By looking at two different types of employment I wanted to assess whether and how the policies and practices at the sheltered workshop differed from mainstream employment and how these differences affected disabled workers' intra-actions in the workplace. Further to this, Able-Industries allowed me to access and observe a large number of disabled people within one environment; this would not have been possible if only conducting interviews. For instance, I was able to see how and in what way individuals intra-acted with their own and others' impairments, the material objects of the job role and the sociomaterial space. However, as others have recognised, one of the main challenges of conducting ethnographic research in a disability organisation is "even getting access to, and cooperation from, a stigmatized group, the members of which share the experience of commonly being characterized and met as the Other" (Sörensson and Kalman, 2018, p. 707). On identifying Able-Industries as a site of interest a letter was sent to request access in 2015. The manager of the organisation responded that they were interested in the research and at an initial meeting, both parties agreed to a research agenda. Following the ethical approval (see Appendix 2), formal consent was granted by the manager of Able-Industries and participant observations began in February 2016.

4.2.3. The research organisation: Able-Industries

Able-Industries is a small, charity-based, sheltered workshop operating in the UK that specialises in employing individuals who have a disability. They provide opportunities to develop work skills and, where possible, help employees transition into mainstream employment. The manager (Joyce) of Able-Industries explained they had five types of people working at the organisation. These included:

- 1) "*employees*" - referred to Able-Industries through the Jobcentre Plus for the government scheme Work Choice programme. These individuals were paid minimum wage.
- 2) "*funded clients*" - referred from and received external funding from the local council or social services to access educational training onsite. These individuals came to the workshop in a "*day-care opportunity*" capacity as they required more support. They were not paid a wage but were given a £4 daily stipend to cover expenses such as lunch or travel.

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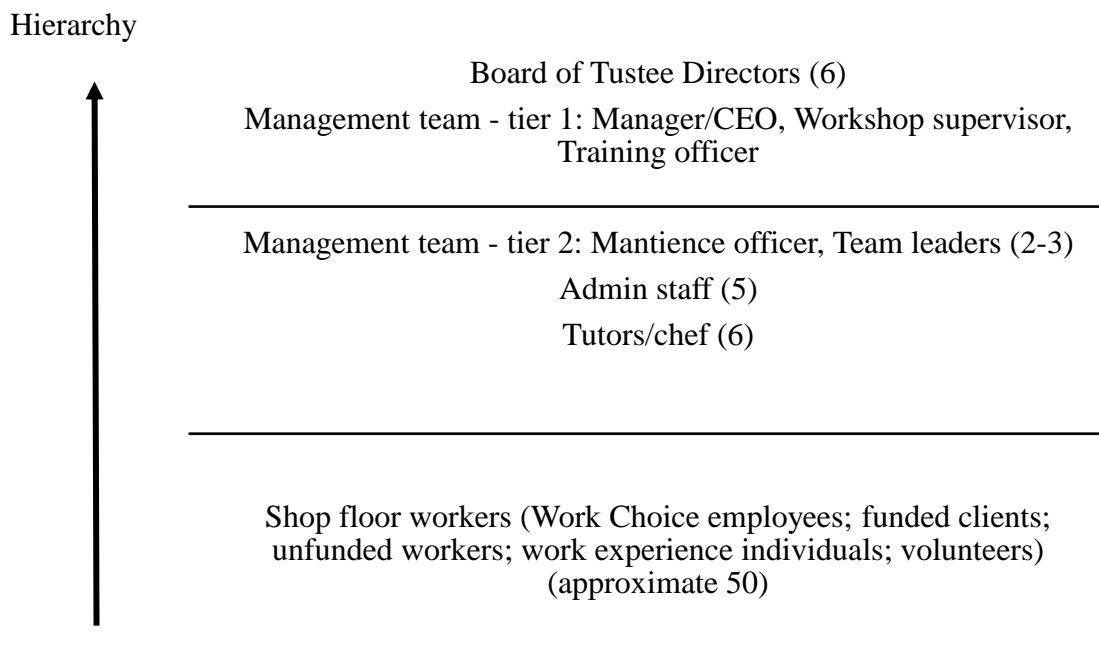
3) “*unfunded workers*” - direct hires from advertisements placed by the organisation to take on more workers during peak times. These individuals were paid minimum wage. The unfunded workers were often able-bodied individuals who had difficulties in finding employment, such as new immigrants with limited language skills.

4) “*volunteers*” - individuals who volunteered their time and skills to support the organisation. For instance, the board of directors who supported the organisation were all volunteers. These individuals were not paid.

5) “*work experience clients*” – referred from a local college on short-term placement or were given the opportunity to develop some employment-based skills if they did not meet the requirements for first two schemes. These individuals were not paid but were given a £4 stipend to cover expenses such as lunch.

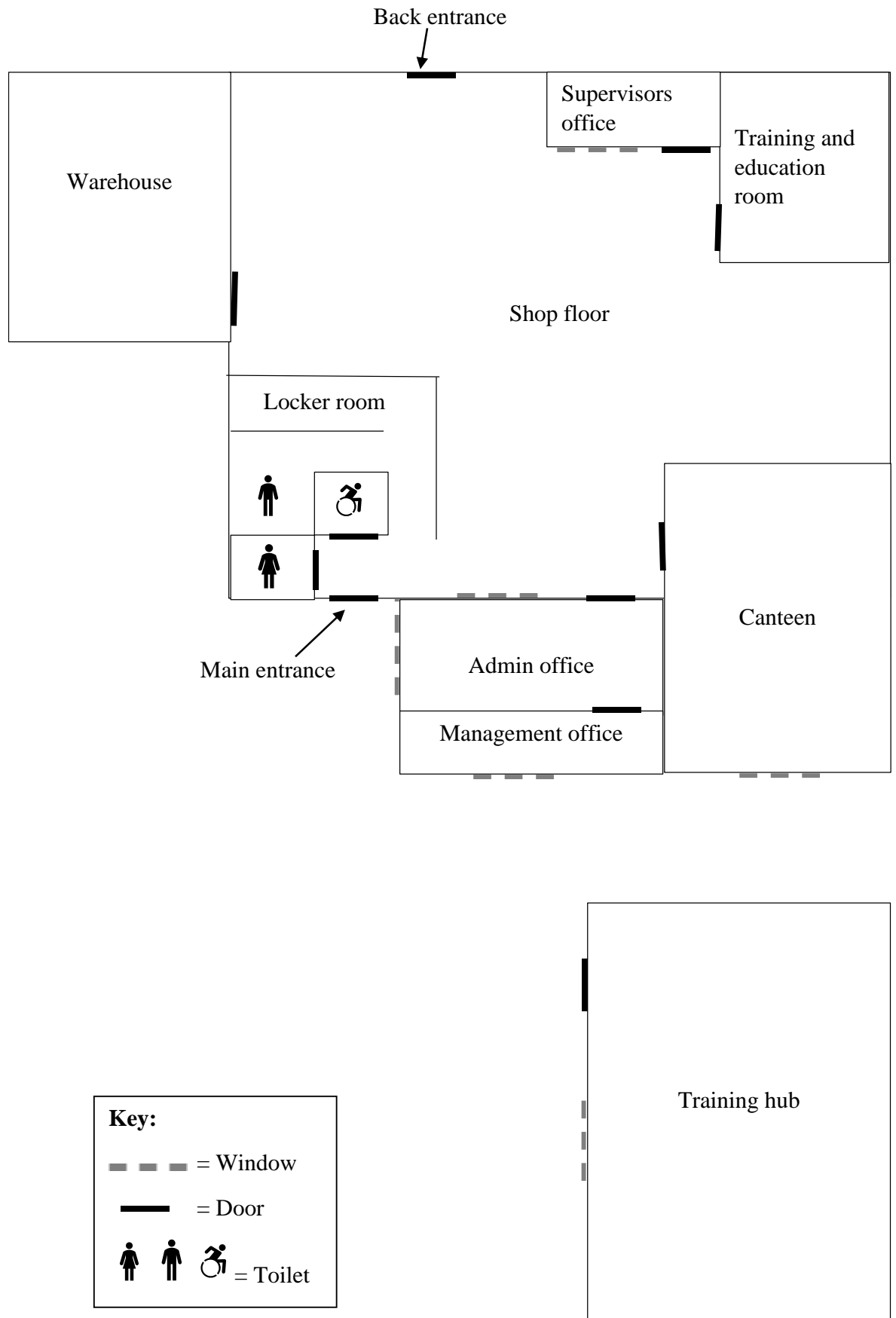
Most of the individuals who worked at Able-Industries have a disability, however, there were various types of disability present including physical disability (congenital and acquired), mental illness, cognitive disability such as a learning difficulties, and sensory impairments such as d/Deafness, blindness or deteriorating eyesight. The severity of the disabilities varied, nonetheless all workers were deemed competent and able to work without individual one-to-one support.

There were various levels of employment in Able-Industries, each with their own levels of seniority (arguably separated into three levels), as visually represented below in Figure 4.1. There was a range of demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, religion, social-class) in the research sample at Able-Industries. There were around 50 employees who worked in some capacity, however, at any given time only 25-30 people were present. Many worked on different hours or days (part-time or full-time) across the working week. There were twice as many men than women and women were more likely to work in the offices, completing managerial and administrative work. Although English was the prominently spoken language at the workshop other languages were spoken such as British Sign Language (BSL), Urdu, Polish, and Latvian. The shop floor workers were not required to wear a uniform or a strict dress code, although clean smart-casual clothing was preferred by the management team.

Figure 4.1: The inferred hierarchy at Able-Industries

The organisation's building was set across one level and appeared wheelchair friendly. Although no wheelchair users were in employment during the observations some individuals did use crutches. The workspace comprised of multiple rooms, including offices, the canteen, shop floor, toilets, cloakroom, training room, and a warehouse (see Figure 4.2). Outside, on one side of the building there was a carpark and on the other a 'hub' was being developed from a former porter cabin into a training cabin with a functional kitchen for life skills training, namely cooking and domestic cleaning. The shop floor and the canteen were the only freely accessible places that shop floor workers could access without seeking permission. The offices, warehouse and training room all had guidelines in place such as knocking before entering. In the case of the warehouse only individuals with health and safety qualifications could enter it at specific times because of the machinery and objects present.

Figure 4.2: Floor plan of able-Industries



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The type of work available at Able-Industries was varied and dependent on the contracts sourced from external companies. The types of tasks available included unboxing various products such as hairbrushes or foot files and placing them into individual packaging, or placing screws into sealable packets for flat-pack furniture. Able-Industries did make some products onsite, including fruit and vegetable preservative disks and trimmer wires. These products were then packaged and transported out for delivery. Some of the jobs were more intensive or strenuous than others, more so when there was a short deadline for turnaround. For example, one of the contracts required 100,000 bags to be packaged within three weeks. However, the bags needed to be folded in a specified and neat way, where an instruction panel was visible to customers; not all of the workers could complete this job as fast as needed. The team leaders were in charge of setting up jobs on a daily basis. They would, for example, put workers with more physical ability, in other words those who could work fast, on to a job with a fast turnaround. Some of the jobs required working as a team, in a human conveyor belt system, or working individually on a table by themselves, with another person, or a small group, doing either the same or different job tasks (e.g., boxing up pens, shoe insoles, or air-conditioning filters).

As advertised on Able-Industries' website the company provided various training sessions to develop key skills such as mathematics and English. However, these were only available to those that had a supported placement (such as those on Work Choice). Further to this, all employees within the organisation had to complete annual health and safety training and have assessments in Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH); slips, trips and falls; fire safety; and manual handling.

4.2.4. Ethnographic research procedures

The participant observations were undertaken over a prolonged period of 11 months from February to December 2016. The observations initially occurred once a week, however, as rapport developed with members of staff this was increased to two days a week after three months of observations.¹⁶ Over the 11-month period, 36 days of participant observations were conducted at Able-Industries. Most of the participant observations consisted of personal involvement in work tasks during usual operating hours (8.30 am – 4 pm) and working alongside the majority of the employees. The first day of the participant observation involved informing the staff and workers why I was there by providing a printed research brief, getting their informed verbal consent and answering any questions they had. As there

¹⁶ Observations were not conducted every week throughout the time period due to holidays, illness, and work commitments.

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were some d/Deaf individuals that attended Able-Industries the information was given, and consent provided, with the aid of a BSL translator who provided ongoing communication when needed.

At the start of the ethnographic observation the team leaders treated me as any new worker, they checked how I was progressing with the jobs they had assigned. Nonetheless, I was eager to follow the observed protocols, schedule, and accepted behaviour, for instance conversing with other shop floor workers. To situate myself in the new environment I observed the behaviours and the structure of the workspace. Notable intra-actions included having to shout for one of the team leaders when I ran out of materials for a job, asking other workers when I was unclear on a task, and confirming that I was completing a new job correctly. Throughout the observations I followed the routines and procedures in place at the workshop, for instance, I asked the team leaders when I arrived what work required completing. I also completed employee and staff training, including training undertaken by the management team and team leaders.

4.2.5. Phase two: Semi-structured interviews

During the last two months of fieldwork, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Able-Industries workers (see Table 4.1 for demographic details). Semi-structured interviews were chosen to further explore the disabled workers' experiences, as this was the most appropriate way of collecting additional in-depth qualitative data to triangulate with the participant observation field notes. Semi-structured interviews are an appropriate method of data collection, as opposed to surveys, when investigating topics that are more sensitive in nature (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). Conducting qualitative interviews with workers allowed for greater details to be obtained on their everyday work experiences, such as their personal beliefs and opinions (Legard et al., 2009). Undertaking interviews also gave me the opportunity to ask workers to comment on some of the events I had witnessed whilst volunteering at the workshop (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 145). Prior to any interview full informed signed consent was collected from all employees to adhere to ethical procedures.

Table 4.1: Study one research participant demographics

Pseudonym	Age range	Employment status	Employment tenure	Disability	Disability type
Mary	45-54	Part-time, unfunded client.	5-10 years	Rheumatoid Arthritis, Cataracts, Learning difficulties.	Acquired and congenital
Sally	55-65	Part-time, Work Choice.	30 + years	ADHD, Learning difficulties	Congenital
Boris	45-54	Part-time, Work Choice.	1-4 years	Brian injury	Acquired
Hayley	45-54	Part-time, Work Choice.	5-10 years	Epilepsy, Tuberous Sclerosis, Heart condition	Congenital
Adam	45-54	Part-time, Work Choice.	20-30 years	Mild Learning difficulties	Congenital
Jason	30-44	Part-time, Work Choice.	5-10 years	Asperger's syndrome	Congenital
Joyce	55-65	Manager	5-10 years	Neuropathy to hands and legs	Acquired
Henry	55-65	Part-time, Work Choice.	5- 10 years	Dyslexia	Congenital
Indra	18-29	Part-time, Work Choice,	1-4 years	Deaf	Congenital
Frank	55-65	Part-time, Work Choice.	5-10 years	Deaf	Congenital
Samuel	30-44	Part-time, Work Choice.	1-4 years	Dyslexia	Congenital
Diana	45-54	Management team: training officer	1-4 years	Severe foot damage, a heart condition, kidney failure	Acquired

The 12 interviews were carried out onsite at Able-Industries and ranged from 14 to 100 minutes in length, with an average time of 54 minutes. The 14-minute interview was cut short as the BSL translator for one of the Deaf workers had to leave for an appointment. Nonetheless, the interview provided much valuable contextual information of the participants life prior to working at the workshop. The research participants' ages ranged

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from 29 to 65, and the mean age of the participants was 50. This is an accurate representation of the employees at the workshop as most of the shop floor workers appeared to be in their 40s or 50s. As shown in the table above, many of the employees were employed part-time with some only working one or two days a week. Although the interviews were split equally with six women and six men this is not a true reflection of the ratio of women to men, as there were twice as many men than women working on a given day. All the interviewees were white, and all but two were born and raised in the UK. With regards to the two exceptions, one of the men originated from Ireland and one of the women originated from Eastern Europe.

4.2.5.1. Research procedure and reflections

The interviews were held in a variety of rooms, namely the learning/training room, the canteen, and the management team's office. The process of collecting data was not seamless, it was often messy and subject to a number of disruptions which affected the flow of interviews or how I could conduct observations: this is reflected on in this section. For instance, when interviews took place in closed private rooms a member of staff was present, such as the chef in the kitchen or admin staff in the training room. This was one of the safeguarding measures agreed with the management team to protect both myself and the interviewee. The members of staff were present in the room before the interview took place and therefore this did not need to be prearranged. As another person was present in the room during an interview, consent was sought from both parties. This may have, however, placed people under pressure to give positive answers especially if there were other people in the room. Further to this, the participants could have held back information as they might not have felt truly free to say what they wanted to (Low, 2012). Nonetheless, both positive and negative experiences were discussed and the development of rapport with individuals prior to interviewing them appeared to have negated this issue.

Before conducting interviews, the team leaders or shop floor supervisor's assent was requested in order to limit disruptions to the work schedule (Palmer et al., 2018) and to reassure workers that they would not get into trouble for leaving their job unattended. Several of the interviews were interrupted for a number of reasons including needing to vacate a room for an alternative room, or when a break was scheduled. However, all the interviews resumed after the disruption. In some instances, there was disruption to both the interview and the work schedule of others such as when the canteen was used in the morning when the chef was preparing lunch. In these cases both parties could hear one another talking but the disruption was manageable and both parties verbally consented for the interview to go ahead.

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However, these were an unavoidable consequence of having to conduct the interviews at a small organisation with few appropriate interview locations. Similarly, some of the observations were disrupted if I was asked to work on a table at the back of the room facing a wall, which prevented me from observing others behind me. Equally, if I was asked to work with a small team in the canteen I was unable to observe the main workspace. These disruptions however helped to me understand the practices at the workshop as I experienced them first-hand. The research sample for the interviews was therefore opportunistic as the selection process was influenced by workplace dynamics (Saunders, 2012). The research participants were asked questions (see Appendix 3) on their demographics, their disability, their work employment history, experiences of recruitment, maintaining, and leaving employment. Subsequent questions focused on previous and current support received and any further support they wanted or needed. Some of the questions were the same in all of the interviews but others were specific to the individual as they were influenced by events witnessed and conversations heard during participant observations. All interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 4 for an interview extract) and the transcripts were placed into the qualitative software NVivo for coding.

One of the strengths of collecting data through a semi-structured interview is both the (semi-)structure and the flexibility of this method (Taylor et al., 2015). As the research project had an agenda, the interview questions were written prior to the interview and were informed by the literature review and the ethnographic observations. However, many other questions emerged by the natural flow of the conversation or were follow-up questions. Although conducting semi-structured interviews allowed for the rich in-depth qualitative data to be recorded there are limitations with this method. One of the limitations of asking the research participants questions about their history and past experiences is “the data are partial, incomplete, and always in a process of re-telling and re-membling” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p.ix). Therefore, the information is being recalled and retold for a specific purpose, to answer a question in an interview, which will affect the response given. Additionally, the memories recalled are being retold with hindsight. Thus, there is no way of fact-checking this information, unless viewed in observation, but this defeats the purpose of the thesis - to explore the participant’s own interpretation of their experiences within their sociomaterial world.

4.3. Study two: semi-structured interviews with mainstream employees

The second study conducted for this thesis sought to explore the experiences of disabled women and men who work in mainstream employment. Semi-structured interviews were

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deemed the most appropriate way to collect in-depth data on the beliefs, opinions and experiences of disability and gender for people working in mainstream organisations (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 145). As discussed above, qualitative interviews are more appropriate when exploring topics that are sensitive in nature as they allow for more detailed and reflective responses than other methods of data collection, such as questionnaires or surveys (Wolgemuth et al., 2015).

4.3.1. Sample selection

The research participants were recruited through a number of techniques including self-selection, snowballing and personal contacts. The first seven interviews were conducted as part of a smaller exploratory study in 2015 with the additional five interviews recruited in 2017/2018. For the first wave of data collection, the research participants invited to take part in the research were women who were over 18 years old who had a disability and were currently employed. Advertisements seeking participants were placed online on a disability forum (Disability Sanctuary) and on the social network site Facebook. Only one participant was recruited from the disability forum, the remaining six were recruited through responses to the advertisement on Facebook, four through snowballing. The remaining two were known personally to me and self-selected to take part on seeing the Facebook advertisement. The second phase of the data collection was conducted in 2017 and 2018 and participants were also recruited through an advertisement on Facebook. The women and men who responded to the advertisement stated that they were willing to be interviewed and a suitable time and interview medium (face-to-face, Skype, telephone) was arranged in subsequent correspondence.

4.3.2. Participants

All the respondents who were interviewed disclosed that they had a disability which was medically defined. As shown in Table 4.2 the interviewees were between 29 and 57 years old (mean age 49), and all but one of the interviewees were white and British. One of the research participants was Jamaican and had dual citizenship (Jamaica and British). The types of disability disclosed include physical and neurological ailments such as Crohn's disease, spina bifida, back injuries, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, early-onset Alzheimer's, physical impairments from polio, immune deficiency and post-stroke paralysis. A number of interviewees also experienced some form of mental health condition(s), for instance depression and anxiety, due to their experience of their disability and environmental constraints (Brown, 2014). Not all of the research participants who took part in the study were currently in employment: five had recently left work on ill-health retirement; another

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took voluntary redundancy (but was volunteering); the last individual was unemployed and searching for a PhD scholarship. Their previous job roles included working in the Human Resource (HR) education department for a Scottish city council, a senior lecturer, a radiographer, commercial management, student support mentor, and an electrical engineer. Two of the women worked as volunteers, one as a teaching assistant whilst obtaining a teaching qualification (but had recently worked as a team leader in an organisation), and the last was a multiple sclerosis (MS) society secretary. The remaining women interviewed were a sales assistant in a bakery, a National Health Service (NHS) nurse, an NHS health advisor, and a history records manager at an archive centre. Table 4.2 below provides a wide-ranging record of the demographic data:

Table 4.2: Study two research participant demographics

NAME (pseudonym), and Geographical location	Interview Type	Age	Disability	Education	Employment type (discussed in the interview and ordered oldest to recent)
Sarah, North West England.	Face-to- face	18-29	Spina bifida; Right leg malformation; Hydrocephalus; Double vision (brain injury); Hole in Bladder.	GCSEs; NVQ in beauty therapy; Applying for a teaching course.	Pub bar work; team leader (office- based); Volunteering as a teaching assistant
Linda, South Wales.	Phone	45-54	Multiple sclerosis (MS)	O-Levels; degree in veterinarian nursing; PGCE.	Veterinarian nurse; Teacher; NHS Radiographer; Early ill- health retirement; Volunteers with MS support group.
Sharon, North West England.	Face-to- face	45-54	Slipped vertebra disks; Pernicious anaemia; Anaemia.	Basic GCSEs, NVQ in hairdressing.	Hairdresser; driver; bailiff; NHS health advisor; senior NHS health advisor.

					Volunteering: mental health club; work club –advice for disabled individuals).
Donna, North West England.	Face-to-face	55-65	Partial paralysis of the right arm from poliovirus.	O-levels, NVQ – computers.	Seamstress; Sales assistant.
Judith, North West England.	Phone	55-65	Limited arm movement in right arm from lymph node removal (cancer treatment).	Degree in nursing.	NHS nurse on Trauma ward; NHS Nurse on elective surgery ward.
Penny, North West England.	Face-to-face	45-54	Crohn's disease; Arthritis; Nerve damage in the back.	BSc in Psychology; Masters and PhD in organisational psychology.	Lecturer; Senior lecturer; Early ill-health retirement; Honorary senior lecturer.
Jennifer, Scotland.	Skype interview	30-44	Rheumatoid arthritis; Hip damage from operation.	Good standard grades (GCSE equivalent); Highers (A-levels); Degree in electrical engineering.	Electrical engineer; Office job (insurance); Local council HR in education; Early ill-health retirement.
Sophie, South East England.	Face-to-face	45-54	MS	GCSE's; City and Guilds vocational training.	Housing association manager; MS regional society secretary.
Brad South East England With his wife Zoe present as his carer.	Face-to-Face	45-54	Early-onset Alzheimer's	Degree in electrical engineering.	Electrical engineer (mobile phone technology).

Colin South East England.	Face-to-face	55-65	Slipped disk and nerve damage in the lower back; Depression.	Degree qualification.	Commercial manager in construction; Mentor in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school; Teaching assistant in SEND school.
Sasha North West England.	Face-to-face	30-44	Stroke damage: one-sided paralysis, pain, fatigue.	Foundation degree; CIPD certified; Masters in learning, development, and management.	Student support mentor (own business);
Jane, South East England.	Skype	55-65	Immune deficiency (caused repeat respiratory infections, fatigue, general unwellness), Chronic fatigue syndrome.	Degree and master's in history.	Childminding (p/t), Maternity pressure group (p/t), Records management in an Archive centre.

4.3.3. Research procedure

There were 12 interviews carried out: two interviews were held as telephone interviews, two as a skype conference call (one with video-enabled and one with just audio), the remaining eight were face-to-face interviews, two of which were held in a private room in a health centre, two in a café, and the remaining four interviews were completed in the homes of the interviewees. Of the four interviews I held in the research participant's homes, two were known personally and the remaining two were not. In each instance the interview was chosen in the research participant's home for convenience, for example one interviewee used a wheelchair and had difficulties meeting at a public venue (Bashir, 2018). In order to adhere to ethical procedures, my husband was informed of the address and communication occurred before and after the interview so that my safety was assured at all times. One of the benefits of conducting interviews in a person's home is that it allows for observations to occur to

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learn more about the life of the interviewee (Bashir, 2018). One interview was held with an observer as Brad was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. Brad's wife Zoe (who was acting as his carer) responded to the Facebook advertisement stating his willingness to be interviewed. In order to adhere to ethical guidelines, it was arranged that Brad's wife would be present to assist with the interview as his memory was affected by the condition.

The interviews ranged from 23 minutes to 101 minutes. Whilst most interviews lasted around 60 minutes the shortest interview (23 minutes) was conducted by phone due to the difficulties encountered when we attempted to arrange a face-to-face meeting. Although we were both in our own safe space, the phone signal was not good and this affected the establishment of rapport between me and the research participant, thus influencing the length of the conversation (see Farooq and de Villiers, 2017). This experience led to the decision to arrange face-to-face interviews whenever possible. Nonetheless, the data collected during this interview was valuable to the project for its uniqueness and her honesty on her reflections on her employment history. As discussed above for study one, before any interview took place all participants were read the information sheet that summarised the research project and explained their rights when taking part. Additionally, consent was sought to have the interview audio recorded when consent forms were completed. The research participants were asked a range of questions on their demographics, disability history, current and previous employment role(s), and support they had in their personal and professional lives (see Appendix 5). All of the interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 6 for interview extract) and the transcripts placed into the qualitative software NVivo for coding.

In most of the interviews, for both studies, the women and men openly discussed their disability and their employment experiences, and they were able to positively engage with the interview questions. Two of interviews for the sheltered employment (Samuel and Jason) were affected by a lack of detailed response from the participant and despite reframing questions in a number of ways the responses were still short (Roulstone, 2013). This was affected by the participant's disabilities as observations revealed that both had difficulties engaging in social interaction. The interviews thus required a balance of reframing questions whilst not "putting words into their mouths" (Brewster, 2004, p. 169). Additionally, my extensive personal experiences of intra-acting with disabled family members and volunteering with adults with learning disabilities has made me aware of multiple events, thoughts and feelings which affect disabled people in their daily lives. I was therefore mentally prepared and aware of a number of topics that would be discussed by participants,

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for example, severe mental distress and suicide (Bashir, 2018; Dickson-Swift et al., 2009). Despite talking about difficult topics, it is important to state that the interviews did not appear to cause much upset or discomfort. Instead anecdotes were used as a way to express how they had felt at one point in their lives. This has been reported by scholars such as Wolgemuth et al., (2015, p. 353) who found that:

participants say interviews are emotionally intense, distressful and sometimes painful. The same participants, however, characterize their interview experiences as cathartic, empowering, and therapeutic. They appreciate the opportunity to tell their stories to empathetic listeners and convey hope that talking about their experiences may be of benefit to others.

If there had been any angst detected then, adhering to ethical procedure, I would have given the research participants information on counselling services and/or advice to visit their local General Practitioner for support. It would also have been important for me to follow-up with them to check on their well-being (Bashir, 2018): this however was not necessary. Some research participants, dependent on their history and disability, had more experiences and information they wanted to share which accounted for the range of interview lengths. As discussed above, one of the challenges of conducting research on disability was that I was questioned on my interest in the subject and I was asked whether I had a disability. In these instances I freely shared my family history that both of my parents and various family members had a disability. I found that disclosing personal information about my family history benefited the interview experience as the interviewee's appeared more willing to disclose information (Vänäsantanen and Saarinen, 2013). Being transparent about my history of being a carer for my mother, who has a physical disability from a back injury, and my father, who was diagnosed with late-onset schizophrenia, was positively received by the interviewees who would provide their own thoughts, opinions, and report similar experiences (Tregaskis and Goodley, 2005).

4.4. Ethics

Prior to the data collection full ethical approval was granted by the Open University Ethics Committee (see Appendix 2). Following the ethical guidelines, before any data was collected all of the research participants, in both studies, were briefed on what the research was about, what was expected from them, their ability to control what information they shared and that they could stop talking to me at any time. The participants were given a copy of the information sheet and the consent form to keep. Importantly, the ethical considerations adhered to the British Psychological Society and the Open University's ethical regulations.

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The research respondents were informed by documents and in-person verbally that any information collected would be strictly confidential and all names and places discussed would be anonymised. Furthermore, participants were informed that they would be given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Ethical procedures were followed during the data collection and storage of data. Any notes I made on paper once transferred to a word document was destroyed through shredding. Any field notes I made on my phone were held on a notetaking app and the phone was password protected that only I could access. Once the notes from the phone were written up and safely stored these notes were deleted. Written field notes and interview transcripts were stored on an encrypted, password-protected pen drive. All the recordings were deleted from the recording device after being uploaded onto the encrypted pen drive. Furthermore, all data was held on a secure server accessed via a desktop PC that was also password protected that only I could access. All of the written data was anonymised with places and names changed to protect the identity of those who took part in the research.

4.4.1. Consideration of my role as a researcher

Whilst completing the ethnographic research, it was important that I engaged in reflective practices and to be aware of my positionality in relation to the research context (DeLuca and Maddox, 2016; Berger, 2013). Specific to the research project I was conscious of my status as a PhD student when I knew that some of the workers only had basic qualifications. I did not want this to negatively impact the data collection (Vähäsantanen and Saarinen, 2012). Although I explained at the start of both phases of the data collection that I was a PhD researcher I tried not to bring it up in conversations unless the research participant brought it up first. As most of the respondents were white and from a working-class background, being a young, white woman, from a working-class background afforded me a greater understanding of the day-to-day intra-actions witnessed and/or discussed during the participant observations and during the interviews (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010). Based on my positionality, I could relate to the narratives that were shared due to personal experiences with family members and I was able to share some of my own anecdotes, as discussed above (DeLuca and Maddox, 2015; Vähäsantanen and Saarinen, 2012).

Disabled scholars such as Morris (1993a, p. 63) have issued warnings for non-disabled researchers who explore disability in their research: “I don’t think that I, or many other disabled women, want to read of non-disabled researchers analysing how awful our lives are because we ‘suffer from’ two modes of oppression”. Morris and other scholars argue that those who do not have first-hand knowledge of a disability tend to have a negative

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mindset of what a disability is. Although they do not explicitly state that able-bodied researchers cannot explore disability, they emphasise that any researcher needs to carefully consider their position whilst conducting research. There is a danger that a researcher who does not have first-hand, or any experience, of a disability(s) may lack relevant knowledge and awareness. This could impact their ability to understand the symptoms or embodied experiences, and risk patronising respondents. However, other scholars such as Shakespeare (2006, p. 195) argue that “the idea that having an impairment is vital to understanding impairment is dangerously essentialist”. He instead suggests that it is the “skills and knowledge of an experienced and sensitive researcher, disabled or non-disabled, [which] are required to develop an appropriate account” (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 195). It should be stated here that I have two long-term chronic conditions, endometriosis and muscular-skeletal issues, which are at times disabling due to pain and discomfort. Although I do not assign myself the classificatory label of being a disabled woman, my health conditions can be defined as a disability, affording protection within the Equality Act (2010). I openly admit, however, that my experiences of pain or personal acquaintances with disabled people do not afford me any particular insights into the embodied experiences of other disabled individuals. I can only experience others’ disability by observing their intra-actions from the outside and asking questions to learn more about their unique experiences.

As disability is a sensitive topic, it can cause researchers or participants to become distressed with some of the details being discussed (Bahn and Weatherill, 2012). During participant observations at Able-Industries, some of the women discussed issues that were very important but distressing to them, such as the death of a parent. As per protocol, participants were informed they did not have to share anything they did not want to. However, they shared with me that talking about it made them feel better. This allowed me to see how life events outside of work had an impact on work, and how life transitions had an impact on the respondent’s sense of self. Adhering to ethical regulations at Able-Industries I ensured that participants did not feel too stressed to go back to work. Importantly, I would have approached the team leaders or supervisors if I had any concerns about their well-being as they had been trained to deal with these situations and had previous experience of doing so. However, I was concerned that my lack of personal experience with a more severe condition or long-term disability may limit my interpretation of the observations.

During the initial participant observations the intra-action with material objects and my material body opened me to reflect on how the material world could make my work experiences more or less comfortable. For instance, a hard stool where I sat while working

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caused me considerable bodily discomfort. I would fidget on the chair or try to stretch my back to ease the discomfort. These bodily movements were visible to other workers and consequently a team leader approached me to ask if I wanted to swap my chair. To overcome this issue, I found that for particular jobs standing up caused less strain. However, I had to share this with those who, on numerous occasions asked if I needed a chair. Furthermore, if the given task was very repetitive, which most of them were, and if it involved standing up and looking down, this caused significant discomfort between my shoulder blades due to incorrect bodily posture. This condition is the result of built-up pressure from maintaining incorrect posture and it is only relieved when I slightly crack my back by pulling my arms behind my back, lifting my arms above my head (very visible), or when I visit a chiropractor. The personal physical toll of the jobs competed whilst volunteering at Able-Industries provided real lived awareness of the embodied experiences in the workplace. It also offered some insight into the intra-actions that affect the embodiment of the workers within a specific time and space (Gherardi, 2019). Being aware of my own discomfort and having prior knowledge of various disabilities I found I could recognise visible signs of pain, such as grimacing or small gasps of pain when others were working. Pain (my own and others) was the result of the particular affect economy observed (i.e., multiple material-discursive intra-actions). This included how the material reality of a disability (e.g. arthritic joints) intra-acted with material objects (e.g. equipment) and the work activities (e.g. repetitive bodily movement when boxing material objects).

4.5. Data analysis

A thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was the method chosen to analyse the collected data. This was an appropriate method of analysis because of its flexibility and unattachment to any particular philosophy or theory which was compatible with both the chosen philosophical and theoretical framework (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Specifically, a latent thematic analysis is conducted which “involves interpretive work, and the analysis produced is not just descriptive, but is already theorised” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). This type of analysis fits with an agential realist ‘ontoepistemological’ paradigm, with the material-discursive elements of the data being theorised by the chosen theoretical framework, during the analysis. The analysis was abductive in that it was influenced by the literature read (top-down/deductive) and also influenced by the data (bottom-up/inductive) by looking at the ways that the data answered the research questions. The abductive approach when conducting data analysis has been suggested as appropriate for “empirical-based theory construction” (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012, p. 167).

This research is exploratory but critical in nature. As a result during the thematic analysis I actively sought patterns within the data, relevant to the research questions. The latter were drawn out through coding transcripts which were then developed and refined into themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This type of analysis was chosen over alternative analysis, such as discourse analysis (Oswick, 2012) and conversational analysis (Greatbatch and Clark, 2012): these two types of analysis focus on societal discourses through language which would hinder a posthumanist performative analysis which seeks to deconstruct essentialist and normative boundary practices within society (Mauthner, 2018). Specifically, these types of analyses would not permit the rigorous analysis of the material *and* discursive aspects of the data appropriate to the chosen theoretical frameworks. Template analysis (King, 2012) was also considered for this thesis. However, the procedures of thematic analysis were more flexible as it allowed each datum to be individually coded and codes were not imposed upon the data which a template analysis would require. There was some similarity in the two types of the analysis, for example a number of the same codes were used across the data sets. However, this judgement was made during each coding session rather than applying a template for each datum analysed. The thematic analysis allowed me to group the coded data into themes that were reflective of the intra-actions present within the data rather than applying essentialist and normative discourses on to the data. The data were then interrogated further with a posthumanist performative lens.

The qualitative assistive software NVivo (version 10) was used to code both the ethnographic field notes and interview transcripts. The use of software such as NVivo allowed for the data to be easily manipulated and organised when reviewing codes and later themes. The analysis procedure followed the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) which included: familiarisation of data, generation of initial codes (see Appendix 7), the search for initial themes, the review and finalisation of themes (see Table 4.3), and production of findings. After multiple readings of each transcript and after noting my initial thoughts, each data transcript was coded sequentially with the text being coded on a line-by-line basis; the codes could be applied to just a sentence or a whole paragraph depending on the relevance to the code. For example, on reading a transcript if the participant was talking about managing their disability then that piece of text was sub-coded to management, which was situated under the top code of disability. Initially many codes were produced but these were subsequently reviewed in light of the research questions. Some codes were then rejected because of the lack of coded data or relevance. Other data extracts were re-coded if appropriate. These codes were then grouped accordingly into second-order codes which were refined into subthemes. Then on reviewing these subthemes the overarching themes

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were identified (see Table 4.3 for themes, subthemes and codes). This procedure identified themes across and within each data set such as looking at whether a theme was attributed to individual interviews or whether it was prominent across the different types of data collected (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

In many instances, some aspects of data were given multiple codes which highlighted the entanglement of multiple factors. During each phase of the data analysis initial ideas were noted on the themes that emerged within the coded data and were then revised. As stated by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 90) some of the initial codes did become themes, for instance support codes (support given, and support needed for: external, organisational, family/friend, personal) formed the theme 'practical and work-based support'. Similarly, single codes of inclusion, exclusion, and discrimination were combined to create a theme. Additional themes were created when multiple codes were related in some way (see Table 4.3. below). As discussed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) "the 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures - but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question". There were five themes identified across the data set, which related to the research questions stated in Chapter 1. These are inclusion, exclusion and discrimination; cognitive and physical barriers to workplace participation; practical and work-based support; performative enactment of difference; and resisting and disrupting oppressive practices.

Table 4.3. Data analysis themes, sub-themes, and code examples

Themes	Sub-themes	Code Example (note: Top code: a. <i>subcode</i>)
5.1. Inclusion, exclusion and discrimination	5.1.1. Awareness of oppressive practices	5.1.1. Awareness, Lack of understanding, Culture, Organisation politics, Organisational policies, Exclusion, Community, Inclusion, Treatment, Socialisation.
	5.1.2. Promoting an inclusive environment	5.1.2. Recruitment procedures, Productivity, Organisational support (given), Personal investment, Disability acceptance, Ability, Culture, Communication.
	5.1.3. Excluding difference	5.1.3. Exclusion, Behaviour, Socialisation, Judgement, Awareness, Treatment, Isolation.
	5.1.4. Discrimination	5.1.4. Discrimination, Access, Treatment, Material objects, External socialisation, Judgement, Abilities, Normal, Disability: a. <i>Visible or obvious</i> .
5.2. Cognitive and physical barriers to workplace participation	5.2.1. Communicating with others	5.2.1. Communication, Disability disclosure, Judgement, Normal, Gender.
	5.2.2. Perception/attitudinal barriers	5.2.2. Performativity, Judgement, Embodiment and emotions, Discrimination, Redundancy, Ability, Self-Identity, Time off, Consequences.

	5.2.3. Bodily performance	5.2.3. Productivity, Pressures, Observations, Organisational goals, Interventions, Disability : <i>a. Blame, b. Disruption</i> , Material objects, Discomfort, Enjoyment, Sacrifice, Career progression.
	5.2.4. Physical space/access	5.2.4. Physical space, Access, Equality, Legislation, Material Objects, Career Change.
5.3. Practical and work-based support	5.3.1. Importance of support	5.3.1. Accommodations, Awareness, Organisational support (needed and given), Material objects, Technology, Productivity, Communication, Career change.
	5.3.2. Engagement with workers	5.3.2. Intervention, Demonstrations, Communication, Relationship with staff, Rewards, Employment changes, Accommodations.
	5.3.3. Organisational environment	5.3.3. Physical space, Material objects, Personal investment, Organisational goals, Type of employment, Productivity, Employment Policies.
	5.3.4. Managing expectations	5.3.4. Disability disruption, Time off, Tiredness, Role fulfilment, Awareness, Accommodations, Lack of understanding, Employment procedures, Uncertainty.

5.4. Performative enactment of difference	5.4.1. Identity constructions	5.4.1. Normal, Disability: <i>a. Acceptance, b. Blame, c. Disruption, d. Management, e. Type of disability, f. Visible or obvious disability,</i> Personality/characteristics: <i>a. humour,</i> Embodiment and emotions, Family and Friendships, Ability.
	5.4.2. Employment difficulties	5.4.2. Pressure, Uncertainty, Effort, Discomfort, Ability, Stress, Tiredness, Career change, Lack of understanding, Productivity, Work disruption.
	5.4.3. Importance of work for well-being	5.4.3. Enjoyment, Comfort, Ability, Role fulfilment, Productivity, Organisational Identity, Isolation.
	5.4.4. The intersection of disability and gender	5.4.4. Gender, Relationships, Household chores, Job Roles, Job type, Family and friends, Skills, Abilities, Judgement, Discrimination, Treatment.
5.5. Resisting and disrupting oppressive practices	5.5.1. Disrupting disability assumption assumptions	5.5.1. Lack of understanding, Awareness, Normal, Hypocrisy, Social Identity, Type of employment, Disability: <i>a. Blame,</i> Self-Identity, Ability.
	5.5.2. Maintaining employability	5.5.2. Role fulfilment, Ability, Career ambition, Skills, Security, Education level.
	5.5.3. Organisational resistance	5.5.3. Organisational Support (given), Personal investment, Relationship with staff, Life transitions, Lack of knowledge, Communication, Organisational goals, Awareness, Demonstration.

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Once the above themes were formed, the data was then further diffractively analysed. The data and theory were read through one another using a feminist posthumanist performative lens. Specifically, the data was analysed by drawing on the evidence of material-discursive practices within and across the themes. This also involved noting how the intra-acting codes/elements coalesced to affect the experiences of the research participants. As discussed above thus far, the analysis required knowledge and an awareness of multiple and entangled agentic elements including historical, cultural, political, social, and scientific material-discursive practices that intra-act within and across, space, time and matter. Furthermore, the ‘ontoepistemological’ position outlined above “shifts our thinking from not only how discursive performative speech act or repetitive bodily actions produce subjectivity, but also how subjectivity can be understood as a set of linkages and connections with other things and other bodies” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 113). These elements are discussed in the next chapter and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 during the discussion.

4.6. Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach taken in this research project which explores the experiences of disabled women and men in sheltered and mainstream employment. It has outlined the dominant ontological and epistemological positions before critically discussing how an agential realist ‘ontoepistemological’ approach is appropriate to the aims of this research. The chapter further explained the rationale for conducting a qualitative ethnographic study with semi-structured interviews for study one in a sheltered workshop, and semi-structured interviews for study two in mainstream employment. Study one was ethnographic and based on participant observations at Able-Industries, a sheltered workshop, with semi-structured interview being held with 12 members of staff in the last phase of observations. Study two involved semi-structured interviews with 12 individuals who were in or had recently been in mainstream employment. The discussion then moved on to the ethical procedures and my reflections on the research procedures, such as my positionality and the power differences I experienced. Finally, the rationale for the chosen analysis was discussed before explaining how the process of data analysis took place. A table was presented to show how the themes and subthemes were informed by the codes constructed in the analysis. The findings are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings of the thematic and posthumanist performative analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected during the ethnographic study at the sheltered workshop and the interview study with mainstream employees. As discussed in Chapter 4 the data were coded and grouped into five themes informed by the literature reviewed and the data relevant to the research questions. Feminist posthumanist performativity was used as the theoretical lens to understand how material-discursive practices (e.g. hiring procedures; bodily prejudices) performatively enact disability and gender to affect the embodied experiences of disabled women and men in the workplace. The themes are: 1) inclusion, exclusion and discrimination; 2) cognitive and physical barriers to workplace participation; 3) practical and work-based support; 4) performative enactment of difference; and 5) resisting and disrupting oppressive practices. Data extracts, however, often had multiple themes running through them and therefore there are overlaps in the findings across and between multiple themes.

Before presenting the findings, it must be acknowledged that although the themes portray some commonality around micro, macro and meso discourses, each person's anecdotes are exclusive to the material-discursive practices they encounter during their intra-action with other bodies, material objects, and sociomaterial spaces. Additionally, these anecdotes are specifically recalled during their intra-actions with me and there are multiple factors that potentially affected their recollection¹⁷. Therefore, it is important to stress that the findings are a collection of intra-actions which are not intended to represent homogeneity across all disabled women and men. Instead, the findings explore how the participants' embodied experiences are affected by their intra-action with other people, material objects, spaces, and places which performatively enact discourses that exclude or include bodies. Specifically, the analysis shows how social norms are reinforced, challenged or constrained by the dominant material-discursive practices embedded within society.

As discussed previously, this thesis adopts the term intra-action, rather than interaction, to denote the inseparability of material phenomena and discursive practices which is linguistically presented as material-discursive. It is important to note that references to practices are theorised as being material-discursive practices. Additionally spaces are

¹⁷ It is important to note that the quotes provided are often cut in places to show the most relevant sections of that particular part of the transcript and/or cutting out the irrelevant acknowledgements or words spoken by the interviewer which breaks up the speech; this is represented by using three periods -...-.

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theorised as being sociomaterial, in other words spaces are both social *and* material. To reiterate, intra-actions are observed phenomena which record a specific agential cut: a specific moment of knowing and being. For many respondents their sense of self was felt through the body and their anecdotes highlight how their experiences were embodied with other bodies, material objects (e.g. technology, office equipment) and the sociomaterial spaces they traversed. The analysis shows how the ethical agentic affects produced during intra-actions with other people and spaces performatively reproduced or disrupted disability and/or gender a form of oppression. The first theme to be discussed is inclusion, exclusion and discrimination.

5.1. Inclusion, exclusion and discrimination

There were two types of employment explored in the data analysis: sheltered and mainstream employment. Sheltered employment is geared towards providing support for disabled people and/or other diversities who struggle to enter mainstream employment, such as immigrants and/or ethnic minorities. Mainstream employment, however, is ‘open’ to all and as such is not typically adept to support (thus excludes) disabled individuals due to the one-size-fits-all practices enacted. This theme interrogates what intra-acting factors coalesce to affect the experiences of inclusion, exclusion and discrimination when entering and maintaining employment for disabled women and men. Although a broad theme, instances of inclusion, exclusion, and discrimination were prominent within the data which affected the participants’ and others’ belief that the participants fit or misfit within their organisation. Although the main context of this thesis is employment, it is important to consider how wider material-discursive practices enacted within other relational sociomaterial spaces (e.g. the home, school, public spaces) affected the embodied work experiences of the research participants.

5.1.1. Awareness of oppressive practices

An awareness of the oppressive practices that individuals can face as a result of their disability, gender, class, or ethnicity was a key factor in reported positive and inclusive intra-actions with others. Specific to the data collected, the management at Able-Industries’ claim that their ethos is grounded in providing an inclusive environment for all. For Able-Industries the management team’s experience of working in senior positions in large corporate organisations, along with their experiences of having a disability, appeared to make them uniquely qualified for their positions. They are aware of the practices enacted within or outside organisational spaces which reinforce oppressive discourses placed onto disabled women and men bodies (e.g. prejudice and discrimination). They also have first-

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hand experience of the historical and cultural performance-based norms embedded within organisational policies and politics that privilege those seen to be the ideal worker and exclude those seen to be ‘other’ (Braidotti, 2006, 2019). As discussed in Chapter 1, these sociomaterial exclusions are rooted in the historic and cultural discourses that performatively (re)produce disability as a form of vulnerability and dysfunctionality which threaten the profit driven capitalist market economy.

Both Joyce (Manager, Sheltered) and Diana (Training officer, Sheltered), from Able-Industries, after their respective illnesses and injury, rejected returning to work at a corporation. They sought an alternative employment institution, which claimed to challenge the societal norms that oppress disabled women and men, and treat them as valued employees. Choosing an alternative type of employment was a form of identity work that allowed them to maintain a positive work identity in a workplace that did not performatively enact oppressive practices that excluded disability or gender. They claimed during their interviews that their personal experience of a disability influences their daily managerial practices:

“I think it makes you more... I won't use the word sympathetic ‘cos that sounds a bit patronising but it makes you more in tune with what the guys are going through...it's a good thing the management team all have disabilities...’cos we know what it's like...we know how much of a struggle it is to get people to accept that you can do the job.” (Joyce, Sheltered, Manager)

Research shows that mainstream employers have repeatedly drawn upon and performatively enacted stereotypical discourses focusing on what bodies are. Those discourses reproduce disability and gender as a form of oppression which perpetuates sociomaterial exclusions (Lindsay et al., 2019; Dale and Lathom, 2015). The interview data and observations revealed that senior staff having a disability awareness was beneficial in a number of ways: 1) the management team were aware of the anxieties and barriers in trying to find employment; 2) they were aware of the difficulties the applicants may have had to overcome to reach the workshop; and 3) the staff's knowledge and awareness of how disabled people intra-acted with the workplace, and the objects within it, made them alter their work practices to have positive impact on the day-to-day operation of the workshop (Braidotti, 2013b).

Joyce (Manager, Sheltered) claimed to use her position as general manager, a position of power and privilege in relation to others, to ensure that her employees do not feel that they are pejoratively different. However, I witnessed during participant observations that

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workers were watched, judged, and singled out for their work performance and told to do better by the manager:

‘[Joyce] stated that she didn’t mind Mark being a little bit slower, but said that she had managed to fold at least 5 bags to his one. She told him that he needed to pick up the pace or the job wouldn’t get finished. She told him to stand up as that might help so he did (note: he was currently sat down)’ (Field note).

Consequently, although Joyce is aware that disabled employees are subject to discriminatory practices, it was confusing to me that she also set production targets that placed bodily expectations on the workforce. The above intra-action made me uncomfortable as I could see how it affected Mark to be told his work performance was not good enough. It equally made me nervous as I knew Joyce would be scrutinising the work of others on the table, including my own. Joyce claimed during her interview, however, that the practices enacted are not as strict as mainstream organisations but “*we do still expect them to be pushing themselves to achieve the best they can*”. Nonetheless, I did witness that Joyce sought to disrupt and challenge exclusionary organisational practices when she invited external people such as potential employers of staff or Job Centres officers to visit the organisation. Joyce aimed to visually show the capability of disabled workers by giving tours of Able-Industries and explaining what workers were doing, and sought to form relationships to benefit the organisation (i.e. to receive funding) or the employees (i.e. new job opportunities) (see section 5.5).

As most members of staff at Able-Industries have a disability with similar histories of experiencing oppression, many of the respondents experienced a shared sense of inclusion within the organisational space: “*we are all in the same boat here*” (Sally, Sheltered). The observations and interview data revealed that, on most occasions, the practices enacted within Able-Industries led to feelings of “*community*”, security, and freedom to be oneself within the confines of the workplace (the “*same boat*” that they all share). This included allowing individual employees to work at their own pace, allowing employees to swap jobs if they had difficulties with them, and giving them emotional support to improve their well-being. The practices enacted within the sheltered sociomaterial space had the capacity to positively affect the well-being of the employees. This contrasted sharply with the sheltered employees’ previous experiences of dominant societal norms and oppressive organisational practices that excluded employees on the basis of their difference to dominant norms. It is important to note here that the observations revealed that the behaviours, embodied experiences, and practices observed and recorded are affected by an assemblage of entangled

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material-discursive practices that converged within and around Able-Industries. The assemblage includes:

- the policies imposed and enacted by the organisation;
- the people situated within the organisation and how they reproduced or rejected oppressive practices during their intra-actions with other people and objects;
- how the physical space, technology and material objects effect the performance of workers;
- the imposed regulations of the government, local council, and professional bodies (i.e. Quality Care Commission) that affect the daily practices within the organisation;
- the economic climate; and
- the available funding for the charity.

The above entangled factors within this assemblage greatly affected the embodied experiences of the management team. This was palpable during the observations and interviews when Joyce and Diana shared their frustrations with imposed external practices with other workers during staff meetings: “[Joyce] *said that so far she was doing everything herself and it was killing her*” (Field note). This made me feel sympathetic towards their predicament as they noted, and it was seen, how the above factors effected their health whilst they endured difficulties in supporting staff and managing the daily operations of the charity-based organisation.

For participants employed in mainstream organisations where their manager had some direct or indirect experience of a disability (i.e. disabled family/friend), they reported experiencing more inclusive and supportive organisational practices. For example, Sharon (Mainstream) who works as a health advisor had a manager called Fiona who has a disabled sister. Sharon explained that Fiona was thus more aware and accommodating when Sharon applied for a health advisor position and “*told them it is a progressive degenerative disease... [that will] get worse*”. Sharon also believed that “*being honest is a good way right from the beginning...because your employer is a lot more flexible then... ’cos they understand a bit more*” (Sharon, Mainstream). It was important for Sharon to share the knowledge of her deteriorating body and her inability to work in the same way as an able-bodied employee. This was a strategy to avoid exclusionary performative practices. Sharon was hired and she believed that Fiona was the “*best line manager I’ve ever had*”, but she later contradicted this claim by stating her managers attempted to metaphorically wrap her “*up in cotton wool*” to protect her fragile body by slowing down her work duties. On another occasion Sharon’s managers forgot her impairment by booking inappropriate training rooms in buildings with

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no lift access which excluded her from attending. Fiona's intra-action with Sharon is influenced by the knowledge of seeing her own disabled sister successfully pursue a career. Fiona thus mostly rejected the historical and cultural oppressive practices of disability by acknowledging that Sharon's bodily reality did not dictate her work ability. Nonetheless, Sharon described feeling "*held back*" though restrictions to certain job activities (e.g. chair training exercise) when she was asked to take "*baby-steps*" to prevent her having to take time off ill. There are a number of power relations that affect the intra-actions between Sharon, her managers and the sociomaterial work environment: first, by placing the responsibility of managing ill-health within organisational spaces onto the individual, this reinforces disability as a form of oppression for its disruption to the neoliberal capitalist market economy (Braidotti, 2016). Furthermore, ignoring or challenging the employees own assessment of their bodily ability within the workplace reinforces the stereotypical social norms that excludes bodies from full societal participation.

Other participants described the importance of being fully included by the co-workers during social activities outside of the workspaces:

"no one treat[ed] you any different, you were still included on nights out, or when they went bowling....obviously with bowling I had to say "I'll come, but you know it's not something I can do...but I will come, and I'll just sit and I'll watch if that's ok?", and everyone was like "yeah that's fine" you know just to...make me included." (Sarah, Mainstream)

Although Sarah, who has spina bifida, was excluded from the sociomaterial space and the practices enacted within (i.e. picking up and throwing a bowling ball) she was able to do more than "*just watch*". She demonstrates how having a physical difference did not affect her ability to socially intra-act and develop relationships with her co-workers. Sarah also drew on but simultaneously disrupted, the practices she believed people enacted that reinforced disability as a form of oppression, namely that if you have a disability you "*sit at home*" feeling lonely. The intra-actions between herself and her co-workers led to a shared awareness of her physical limitations, and how this mostly affected her ability to enter her work space and *not* her ability to perform her job role. Through these social intra-actions, Sarah's colleagues also became her friends and would watch for her to arrive at the work building. Without questioning her competency of being a team leader, they then offered to help her when she frequently struggled to enter the stepped entrance of the building with her bags and equipment. The latter a form of material exclusion that is performatively enacted each time she attempts to enter the building. Therefore, although Sarah and others

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interviewed have felt excluded by inaccessible spaces they have experienced inclusive practices during social intra-actions with their fellow co-workers: although this was not always the case. The relational intra-actions between people, spaces, and matter, thus have the affective capacity to reproduce and disrupt oppressive historical and cultural practices.

5.1.2. Promoting an inclusive work environment

The management team at Able-Industries sought to alter the practices that they enacted to accommodate the diversity of its applicants in a number of ways, such as offering a relaxed and informal working interview and a work trial. This, however, took a lot of the management teams' time, who were regularly seen walking around the workshop showing potential employees the job. This was also disruptive to productivity as they would stop and talk to workers to show the applicant the different jobs that were done onsite. A working interview, however, was beneficial to both parties in that it allowed the applicant to observe and experience the practices enacted within the organisation to assess if the job was a good fit for them. Simultaneously the management team could assess how the applicant fit based on how they intra-acted with the physical workspace, the material objects, other workers and the practices they enacted. This created a less pressured environment that was flexible to the needs and abilities of the individual. To illustrate, I observed that they offered those with social anxiety the flexibility to start their employment with small and increasing increments of one hour a day, up to a full day once a week. This allowed the individual to acclimatise at a pace that was comfortable to them. Sharon (Mainstream), was also given the opportunity to try her current full-time role on a trial basis which gave her the security that if she could not manage the extra hours she had the option to go back to her part-time role without any consequences, such as losing her job. This allowed both the employer and the employee to test the compatibility of the new role as well as promote the well-being of the employee: although as discussed above the manager and Sharon had different expectations and worries about her bodily ability.

Able-Industries did not appear to strictly adhere to the dominant able-bodied and masculine social norms entrenched within organisational practices enacted within mainstream jobs; instead they sought to provide a more inclusive workspace that adapted to the individual's bodily/cognitive abilities. For example, those who had worked at Able-Industries for a number of years claimed during their interview that:

“I find it a lot better here than I would find out in the community [mainstream employment] because I always found that out in the community they give you a lot of pressure...and they want you to work like, ten times faster than I'm

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working here...so the pressure here is you do get a little bit...but you wouldn't get as much as you would get outside.” (Mary, Sheltered)

However, as highlighted above with Mark's experience, this was not always consistent as they did, at times, push people beyond their comfort zones. At peak times when the workshop was very busy with jobs I noticed that all members of staff became more stressed and nervous which affected the atmosphere of the environment. This was evidenced by decreased social intra-actions (i.e. talking, laughter) due to working faster or harder, and there were more complaints of feeling tired or under pressure from the team leaders or the management team actions. In the above extract Mary, like other interviewees, reflects on how able-bodied norms performatively enact disability as a form of oppression, i.e. having to work “*ten times faster*”. The latter form of oppression is reproduced by neoliberal capitalism norms “driven by the profit motive” and the control of “space-time mobility in highly selective ways” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 20). This was personally experienced during the observations at Able-Industries, particularly when I was asked to come in for three consecutive days to work on one job (boxing pens) as the team leaders claimed I was a fast worker (compared with others). I was aware however, on hearing them discuss the upcoming deadline, that I was needed to allow them to meet their production deadline. Furthermore, as a ‘volunteer’ I was not being paid which increased their profit margin as they did not need to remove someone else from their current job to work on boxing pens.

In most mainstream organisations workers are expected to work as efficiently as possible, often with targets and close supervision. Those who do not maintain a one-size-fits-all pace are excluded for their disruption to productivity (Solorach, 2016). These exclusionary practices can lead to injustices and exposure to violence for human and nonhuman beings, for instance homelessness and poverty (Braidotti, 2016). Many at Able-Industries claimed to appreciate a more accommodating environment that accepted the varied productivity levels of their staff, as many workers, from both sheltered and mainstream employment, had struggled with keeping up with the performance expectations in mainstream jobs. I personally, however, found during the observations that the changeable pace of the jobs, notably how fast the jobs needed to be completed, and how the job requirements could change to be confusing (e.g. placing 3 rather than 4 vegetable life extender disks in a packet). For instance, some work days were relaxed with the pace set by the workers, whereas other days the team leaders were seen to constantly watch the pace of workers which caused some, me included, to feel under pressure to rush the job. This resulted in mistakes such as forgetting to remove or include parts of the packaging. The embodied

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experiences of the respondents were affected by capitalist performative norms. For example, they noted how their intra-actions with other people and social spaces ultimately framed their disability in a pejorative way: “*why can't I just go into work? why can't I be like them?*” (Jane, Mainstream); “*they told me that I was... too slow*” (Hayley, Sheltered). Jane and Haley, like other respondents, felt devalued and ultimately “disposable” as employees when subject to capitalist market practices (Braidotti, 2016, p. 21).

An inclusive work environment was directly affected by how successfully disability awareness was integrated into the support practices enacted within the organisational space (e.g. moral support and material support). Moral support was understood and provided in the form of emotional understanding and encouragement without judgement and beyond physical help. To illustrate, I witnessed that Hayley was particularly distressed one day and she explained she felt overwhelmed with the extra jobs she had been asked to do in the kitchen which prevented her from taking a proper break. Diana the training officer, saw her distress and on talking about the issues they agreed that Hayley could step back from some of the kitchen work with no repercussions. This intra-action was encouraging to see as, in this instance, the managers noticed and sought to mitigate their staff's distress placing the well-being of the worker before organisational roles. Nonetheless, as witnessed through observations, outside events (e.g. losing disability benefits) would negatively affect the embodiment of workers which lowered their productivity. For example, Sally was seen to fear being fired and being financially destitute after struggling with her finances, so she adopted stricter productivity behaviours using technology to self-surveillance her physical ability. This included timing herself on a stopwatch on how long it takes to complete boxing a product. Although I noticed that Sally was upset and I saw how this affected her work performance, I was surprised when the team leaders did not pick up on this. It made me question how aware senior staff were of their employees behaviours and how they missed opportunities to enact more inclusive practices, such as inquiring into the well-being of their staff.

5.1.3. Excluding difference

As discussed in previous chapters, the level of support that disabled employees receive affects how an individual experiences a fit or misfit during their intra-actions with other people, material objects and the sociomaterial context of their organisation (Garland-Thomson, 2011). Despite its inclusive mission, exclusionary practices were occasionally witnessed during participant observations and uncovered during interviews at Able-Industries. Although the main focus of sheltered employment is providing employment

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opportunities for disabled people, Able-Industries also employed able-bodied workers, mainly ethnic minorities, or new immigrants with limited English language skills, to promote further diversity. Although different cultural differences were evident at Able-Industries, the use of English language and English culture was prioritised, which at times would become a form of exclusion. For example, during an observation, Diana, the training officer, was seen to encourage those who were learning English to talk with her, in English, to help with their language development. However, this privileges the English language and I witnessed how some workers appeared to feel uncomfortable being forcefully encouraged to speak with her. Diana's insistence resulted in Mohammad (team leader) intervening in the exchange to say the workers English was fine. Additionally, some of the workers at Able-Industries explained they chose to take a course on BSL, so they could learn to communicate and intra-act with their colleagues but in reality this communication was not witnessed. This led to a lack of knowledge production and at times the reinforcement of stereotypical practices surrounding particular bodies (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017). These encounters made me question how stereotypical practices that reinforce disability as a form of oppression can be disrupted if the organisation did not actively promote disability awareness amongst the staff.

From his first appearance at the workshop during the practical element of his interview, it was clear that Thomas, a young, Deaf man with Tourette syndrome, was not perceived as a good 'fit' at Able-Industries. This was because of how other people were affected by the noises he made as a result of his Tourette syndrome. As he was Deaf he had no awareness of how loud his verbal tics were, which elicited a negative response from other workers (e.g. concern and annoyance). Every time Thomas had a verbal tic it disrupted the work performance of others as they looked over at Thomas to find out who was making the noise. This example shows how a lack of awareness of a person's condition can negatively impact a working environment when judging others against normative behaviours. There are, however, two perspectives to consider here. Thomas's impairment (being Deaf) was personally seen not to affect his work performance. The intra-actions between others in the workshop and Thomas, although passive, are constrained and his behaviour (a symptom of his Tourette syndrome) is seen as disruptive. His behaviour was seen as a deviation from the workshop's established normative behaviours which performatively enacted Thomas' impairment to be pejorative. What is important to note, however, is that the shop floor was not noise-free. There was often a radio playing music in the background, and people had conversations that could be heard across the open workspace. Thomas' tics, therefore, were not disturbing the silence but were heard to be different from the other noises within the

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workspace. Despite his vocal disruption to others, Thomas was an extremely capable worker demonstrating his ability to perform the job role he was applying for. This highlights some of the difficulties that disabled individuals can face, regardless of the type of employment, because their behaviours are expected to conform to normative practices entrenched within a particular space. In this instance Thomas's tics was both verbal and visual and this type of uncontrollable behaviour was seen as too different from the organisation's normative behaviours as it negatively affected the work of others. Therefore, the level of inclusion provided at the workshop was surprisingly, in my own reflection, not extended to include Thomas's vocalisations.

On a separate observation, I noticed that Thomas's behaviour was also seen as inappropriate by the management team. On my lunch break on the first day of Thomas' work trail, I entered the canteen and saw Thomas, his mother, and his carer. Thomas was making lots of noises (high pitched and loud utterances) whilst watching something on his mobile phone. Thomas' intra-action with technology had an effect on his embodied experiences which resulted in his tic becoming more vocalised. This was judged to be inappropriate work behaviour despite being in a social space (the canteen). Joyce (Manager) told Thomas' mother and his carer that "*the noise was not really acceptable when people were in the canteen having their lunch as it would disturb them*" (Field note). It was evident that management had not fully realised the implications of Thomas' conditions and they presumed the interdependent relationship with his carer would permit the management of his intra-actions with other people and the sociomaterial space. I found this particular event to be troubling and I reflected upon this in my field notes:

"Joyce then left the room and I stated that I personally was not affected by Thomas's noise, it was not disturbing me. (Note: this was a very awkward situation for myself and possibly others as well, including Lesley who had to convey the information. It shocked me a little as this was meant to be an 'enabling' environment for everyone to feel equal regardless of their disability. But Joyce said this disability was not ok and it was a problem. It was quite harsh and seemed to go against what the place represented and from what Joyce had previously told me)." (Field note)

Although just one example, this demonstrates how a person's ability to work is overshadowed by their uncontrollable behaviours which are not seen to be "*acceptable*" for this work environment. Thomas was not granted long-term access to the workplace as he was found not to fit within the normative behaviours currently permissible at the workshop,

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so he was excluded. Nonetheless, this was a complex case which highlighted the sociomaterial aspects of Thomas's experience of disability oppression. This was exacerbated by Thomas' intra-actions with other people and the social norms reinforced within the multifunctional spaces at the organisation. Thomas wanted more independence and rejected the interdependent relationship with his carer by not wanting him to be too close, and to only intervene when he needed to translate for him. It also appeared that one of the conditions of his admittance was the constant presence of his carer to provide access to communication. This was not the case for the other d/Deaf individuals at the workshop who would only have access to the translator on a Monday and Tuesday. The combination of these factors resulted in Thomas' exclusion from a purportedly inclusive workplace.

The main difference across the two types of employment was the participants' sense of self which was affected by the presence or exclusion of other disabled and able-bodied bodies within their workplace. For the disabled employees at Able-Industries there appears to be a sense of belongingness and shared community that is not present, for the most part, for those interviewed who work in mainstream organisations. Sarah (Mainstream) critically reflect on this during her interview where she voiced her frustrations: "*why? why isn't there...more people here that are disabled? Or... it sounds awful to say but why is everybody here able-bodied?*". Although Sarah experiences inclusion in her access to the workplace she also experiences a conflict, as she was aware that other disabled people are missing as they have been excluded (Braidotti, 2019). For most of her employment experiences, Sarah was the only disabled person, which made her impairment more evident. For those in mainstream employment, it was rare to have worked with others with a visible disability, or had disclosed a disability, which affected their own embodied experiences within the spaces they traversed. It appears that despite some inclusion, to varying degree of success, of different minority identities evident within organisations, the ideological grip of "[c]ognitive capitalism cannot or does not want to over-code these minoritarian subject to the same extent as it territorializes the more profitable ones" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 45). Although Joyce (Manager, Sheltered) criticized the practices that have "*reduced people to a commodity that can be pushed in and out*" during her interview, I observed practices enacted (e.g. pressure to work faster) within the workplace where workers were treated as a commodity to promote trade and profits, be it for their clients or themselves (Braidotti, 2016).

Although the sheltered workshop did attempt to resist practices that imposed bodily expectations and behavioural norms there was evidence of this not always being consistent.

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This revealed the difficulties in breaking away from the dominant capitalist norms that infiltrate organisations, even those who claim to resist or reject these. For instance, during the participant observations I witnessed and was informed that the human body (i.e. oil, hair, skin, blood) was not allowed to be evident in the intra-action between the human body and the material objects that staff were packaging. I was therefore concerned in case strands of my hair would fall into the products being packaged, or on boxing products that were light in colour I was concerned about the transference of dirt and oil from my hands to the product. If there was evidence of the human body's intra-action with material objects (e.g. a fingerprint left on a chrome pen) then the product became contaminated and/or not fit for sale/purchase. This has additional ethical implications as it adds to the destruction and pollution of natural resources, such as products being binned rather than being used. During the observations this appeared to cause some anxiety in some workers who voiced fears of making too many mistakes which would cost the organisation money and result in them being disciplined. This made them feel insecure and disposable in their job. The human body appeared to be "alienised" within the manufacturing environment due to being 'unsanitary' 'dirty' and 'unwanted' within the dominant capitalist assemblage of manufacturing market economy (Haraway, 2006, p. 125).

Overall, the above analysis demonstrates how problematic it is to talk about inclusion and exclusion as separate entities as the embodied experience of the participants were affected by a number of material-discursive practices. These practices were informed by wider societal and/or organisational norms embedded within specific sociomaterial spaces (Garland-Thomson, 2011). Able-Industries, for instance, is meant to be an inclusive workplace, yet some workers were excluded on the basis of their impairment and its affect within the workspace. Whereas, for those successfully employed in mainstream employment being the only one who has an impairment made them question why this was the case.

5.1.4. Discrimination

The data analysis revealed that a lack of awareness on the needs and abilities of disabled women and men within sociomaterial spaces was the main cause of implicit and explicit discrimination for those interviewed. For example, Sharon (Mainstream) claimed managers forgot about her impairment as she "*just gets on with it [i.e. work]*" and as a result "*they will book inappropriate rooms for meetings*". Others felt that using material objects such as a wheelchair led to oppressive social intra-actions in public spaces that performatively enacted their bodies to be disabled (Campbell, 2009):

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“one of the worst things that I find is when I’m in my chair you actually develop superpowers, you become invisible, you have the invisible cloak on from Harry Potter.” (Colin, Mainstream)

This highlights the performative capacity of intra-acting material objects, such as a wheelchair and the body which become a hybrid of human and machine, to performantly enact a disabled body (Haraway, 2006). These encounters also reinforce oppressive practices, with assumptions that a person in a wheelchair also has a mental or cognitive deficiency which ‘justifies’ a lack of social intra-action. As a consequence of such practices, respondents such as Sophie (Mainstream) stated that: “*I refuse to use an implement to help other people make allowances for me*”. If she did use support aids she actively resisted and challenged the labels and discourses attached to particular material objects: “*I call [it a] You-Go because I refuse to call it a wheelchair*” (Sophie, Mainstream). It was, for Sophie, very important that she distanced herself from the label disabled, including the association with material objects, as this term was seen as largely pejorative because of the negative connotation and evidence of the oppression of disabled people. Sophie does concede to using material aids such as the “*You-Go*” during long day trips or holidays with her family so she would be included. However, she discussed her intra-actions with the “*You-Go*” and outdoor social spaces as unenjoyable. Sophies’ outdoor “*You-Go*” use was often affected by the natural elements (i.e. cold and/or wet) due to her body being immobile compared to her family members who were being kinetically warmed with the movement of their bodies by walking or pushing “*You-Go*”. The “*You-Go*” is seen to have a relational affect with the environment and the human body which both disrupts and reinforces disability as form of oppression. For example, Sophie is given the capacity to physically join others outside, but the functionality of the chair also led to negative embodied experiences that performatively enacted her disability. As a result Sophie would avoid any use of material support aids within the workplace to avoid being seen to be vulnerable by her co-workers: this is a form of identity work that is linked to the rejection of using material objects that performatively enact disability (Symon and Pritchard, 2015).

Those with an invisible disability experienced a different assemblage of factors during their intra-actions with their other bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces. Jane (Mainstream), experienced distrust from health professionals, family and friends, who disbelieved the symptoms of her, then undiagnosed, immune deficiency. This distrust affected how she saw herself and she contemplated therapy as a result. Expanding this distrust to gender, Joyce (Sheltered) drew on how historical gendered social norms led to

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disabled women's' bodily reality being judged pejoratively compared to disabled men (Pryma, 2017):

“if it's a man he's got ME 'cos he's like dynamic and he's run himself into the ground...but if the woman's got ME “oh it's 'cos she's got hysterical and she lets everything pile up on her and then she gets too stressed” (Joyce, Sheltered, Manager)

Many others experienced similar oppressive practices during their intra-actions with family, friends, co-workers, or health professionals who disbelieved their bodily reality, and drew on the historical oppressive practices that their bodies evoked, particularly gender behavioural norms. This included assumptions that women would overreact whereas men would be burnt out. The consequences of such oppressive practices affected the sense of self-worth of both disabled women and men due to the difficulties in fully accessing the sociomaterial world. Although many could and did challenge these types of behaviours, it took a toll as is discussed below in section 5.4.

Organisational discrimination occurred when employers appeared to forget what their employees' abilities were and asked them to perform in a way that excluded them. For example, as is discussed below in section 5.4, looking 'normal' was interpreted by many as being 'normal'. As Penny discusses she often found that many of her colleagues could not comprehend that she had a disability. They would enact able-bodied practices during their social intra-actions with comments such as “*you're looking well*” which Penny had to challenge by stating she *felt* extremely unwell by telling them “*if I could lie down and die on this floor this minute I would, 'cos that's how bad I feel*”. Others such as Colin found that:

“in employment...if you've lost an arm people can see it...people who have got mental health problems or an invisible illness ...even though you say to people look I've got this problem, “no you haven't because I can't see it” (Colin, Mainstream)

Both Penny and Colin find that access to moral or material support (i.e. assistive technology) is affected by a number of factors, such as biopolitical practices enacted by individuals or institutions. These practices dictate who can have access to a type of support based on how their (in)visible disability is or is not performatively enacted (Braidotti, 2013b).

In summary, inclusion, exclusion and discrimination is a complex configuration of a number of material-discursive practices that are enacted during intra-actions within and between bodies, material objects and spaces. The discussed anecdotes are also highly

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subjective and constructed as a result of events that coalesced to create a particular moment in the individual's space and time configurations. It also highlights that drawing on alternative material-discursive knowledge, moving away from normative and essentialist assumptions and expectations, leads to a better organisational fit as people are not expected or required to fit dominant social norms of productivity and ability in the workplace. The next theme explores the barriers to employment participation for disabled people.

5.2. Cognitive and physical barriers to workplace participation

Many respondents discussed the cognitive and physical barriers they encountered in the journey to enter and maintain employment. Although not all experiences were seen to be barriers, those which were discussed affected the intra-actions within sociomaterial spaces in multiple ways. The two types of barriers (physical and cognitive) discussed were often intertwined. They are therefore presented as such across four subthemes: disclosure of disability; perception/attitudinal barriers; bodily performance; and physical space/access. Similar to the other themes discussed, the barriers experienced were either linked directly to the individual's intra-actions between the self and their material world, or with other people and the practices that surround material bodies, society, and institutions.

5.2.1. Disclose of disability

Research has shown how disclosing a disability is important to access support, however many respondents reported they either did not want or feel the need to discuss their impairment with their employer. Sophie (Mainstream), for example, has MS and worked as a council housing officer; she would not tell her employees that she had MS fearing that it made her look vulnerable and weak. This however inadvertently reinforces disability as a form of oppression. Similarly, others believed they would be judged and excluded by the enactment of dominant historical and cultural organisational practices, such as not be given due consideration on their actual abilities, if their disability was known. Some went to great lengths to hide their impairment:

“I went and I stuffed my [damaged] foot into a normal shoe...even though I wasn't supposed to wear a normal shoe...because I was so worried that people were gonna judge me.” (Diana, Sheltered, Training officer)

Conversely, others such as Sharon (Mainstream) felt that employers “*need to know I'm disabled*” as it affected how they intra-acted with objects and people in organisational spaces, such as how they used office equipment. Sharon for instance could not “*pretend*” to be able-bodied as her employers would “*find out*” as her work performance was measured.

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Other respondents, such as Sophie (Mainstream), reported choosing to endure the physical and mental toll of concealing their impairments to appear ‘normal’ or rather able-bodied and thus avoid the judgement and oppression of others within spaces outside the home. Sharon (Mainstream), however, challenged the assumption that concealing her impairment would have been beneficial in favour of maintaining an authentic self by ultimately confronting the notion of an ideal worker: this was a form of identity work to maintain a positive work identity without being subject able-bodied expectations. Diana and others, conversely, concealed their disability status in order to pass for ‘normal’.

For respondents who were already in employment and who wanted to discuss their physical and mental health, some found their employers, both men and women, were very reluctant to listen or they were “*squeamish about it*” (Penny, Mainstream). Others “*rarely see the need to tell anyone*” (Jason, Sheltered) about their disability for fear of being judged as “*a bit weird*” (Brad, Mainstream) or “*weak*” (Sophie, Mainstream) by their peers or employers:

“I very rarely see the need to tell anyone... [I] don't like people judging me ‘cos of [my] disability.” (Jason, Sheltered)

There are multiple factors within the affect economy that led to the participants fearing oppressive practices related to their disability and/or gender. Firstly, research has shown that organisations and organisational roles are inherently gendered, and many men and women are socially pressured to enact appropriate hegemonic masculine/feminine behaviours associated with their job role or industry (Visagie and Swartz, 2018; Acker, 2012; Pullen and Simpson, 2009). Both Colin and Penny’s manager, who were men, experienced mental angst (e.g. being “*squeamish*”) when their employees attempted to discuss their impairment and its impact on their ability to work. Secondly, the managers appear to resist the qualitative embodied knowledge of their employee’s impairment as it challenges the often-disembodied masculine behavioural norms of what is ‘acceptable’ employee knowledge within an organisation (Braidotti, 2016). Thirdly, the employers fail to recognise that organisations are sites where the “biological, technological, social, economic, and political forces intra-act” to affect knowing and being as this challenge’s organisational accountability (Barla, 2016, p. 163).

The above intra-actions between managers and employees that reproduce disembodied practices that exclude nonconformist bodies reinforces the separation of the private and personal within public and organisational settings. For instance, many employees refused to accept or consider the multiple extraneous factors that contributed to their

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employee's negative embodiment in the workplace. These included the time employees spent travelling to and from work on public transport and/or their domestic responsibilities in the home which affected their ability to work (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015). The employer and/or organisation placed the responsibility of overcoming these issues on to the employees. Similarly, Brad and Jason also conceal their perceived 'weakness' (i.e. their disability) to avoid judgement from their peers. These decisions to conceal or avoid embodied knowledge upholds masculine privilege and able-bodied ideals in the workplace, which reinforces the power relations attached to dominant identity categories that attribute any difference to these ideal norms as pejorative. It also reinforces the hierarchical binary and socially constructed norms of men-women and disabled-able-bodied which contribute to experiences of social injustice and sociomaterial exclusion within the workplace and other sociomaterial spaces (Braidotti, 2016).

5.2.2. Perception/attitudinal barriers

Pressure to adhere to able-bodied and masculine norms of performativity placed many respondents into a position of 'inferiority' (e.g. I'm/you're too slow; what's wrong with you/me?). Some experienced difficulties finding a suitable job due to this and despite having qualifications many felt that when entering places to try and find work such as the Job Centre that they were treated "*like a piece of dirt*" and offered unskilled jobs that they believed the job coaches "*wouldn't do...themselves*" (Henry, Sheltered).

"[it was] a waste of time going down the Jobcentre every fortnight... people used to love going down there!...but I never...and then they just treat you like a piece of dirt, especially the youngsters anyway...saying you can do that job, but they wouldn't do it themselves." (Henry, Sheltered)

This demonstrates how public funded support systems through Job Centres contribute to the political control of bodies. This is a form of biopolitics, that maintains the inequality and economic instability of those deemed as socially undesirable, or labelled 'other', by those in positions of power (Braidotti, 2013a, 2016). Additionally, on arriving for an interview at a potential organisation some of the respondents received discriminatory attitudes, attributed to their disability and their gender, that made them feel that they were "*not entitled to try for that job...like the next person is*" (Sarah, Mainstream). In these examples the individual/s who can grant access to an organisation performatively enacted practices of oppression, such as an unsuccessful interview. The latter determines what type of body is authentic and who matters for a particular role in a particular space. It is the performative enactment of measurement (i.e. judgments made during interviews), by focusing on what the body is

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rather than what it can do, which has the ethical consequences of social injustice and exclusion (Barad, 2007; Barla, 2016).

The majority of the respondents had difficulties entering and maintaining mainstream employment due to being measured against entrenched sociocultural and organisations norms. The performative enactment of able-bodied and gendered norms within organisational spaces led to exclusionary practices as the participants' bodies were pejoratively viewed as disabled or masculine/feminine. These exclusions created an affective response (e.g. "*upset*", hurt, confusion or "*anger*") as some felt that their bodies and their embodied experiences did not 'matter' compared to others (Barla, 2016):

"Interviewer: do you feel like having a disability has any impact on any of your jobs or your aspirations?

Sally: It has, and it's very upsetting, 'cos when I hear about all my cousins...and my brother, and sister-in-law have done well and I've sort of failed. (Sally, Sheltered)

Many of the respondents sense of worth was devalued by others or themselves. This happened when comparisons or judgement were made on how and why they were different to their able-bodied peers (or their previous able-bodied state) in multiple spaces (e.g. home, work, sports venues etc). Their judged (in)ability to perform, or experience life, on par with their non-disabled peers is deeply embodied. For example, Sophie (Mainstream) discussed a particular intra-action with an material object in the home (a mirror) that allowed for her to reflect (physically and metaphorically) on how she sees herself, despite looking 'normal', after being medically diagnosed with MS:

"I hated myself... I can remember standing in front of a mirror, looking at myself thinking...and all I can see is MS...this horrible kind of disease you know it's just not me, [not] who I thought I was."

Sophies' embodied experience is effected by an assemblage of intra-acting factors including scientific and medical practices that diagnosed her body as having a disease; the historical and cultural norms that performatively enact diseased bodies as pejorative, which Sophie herself enacts; and the practices enacted within spaces and/or by other bodies that exclude impaired and/or gendered bodies from participating within and between spaces because of what they are seen to be. It further relates to a socially constructed ideal self that many strive for, including able-bodied individuals, which is unattainable. This creates an identity conflict

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that is either reinforced, rejected or reformulated on the basis of their embodied experiences in the workplace, home or other spaces (Gerschick and Miller, 1994).

Many respondents chose to move workplaces to reduce the identity/embodied conflict experienced rather than continue to experience this cognitive dissonance or challenge the exclusionary practices (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017). Some engaged in activities of identity work such as deciding to move into self-employment, other jobs, starting new careers, or entering alternative employment to avoid the scrutiny of employer's performance management practices:

“I kind of realised that...I just can't work in... any kind of employment where they just track your illnesses...so I went self-employed and I had an awful lot more money...so then I didn't have to say [about a disability], I could cover it up more.” (Jane, Mainstream)

Jane's experience demonstrates the historic and cultural precedent that work performance is subject to surveillance to make sure that the organisation is getting value for money from their employees' performance (Belton, 2019). This reflects the neoliberal capitalist organisational norms which prioritises profits over the well-being of the workforce. Technological advancements such as laptops, internet connections and Wi-Fi at home, however, have made working from home possible for many which allows them to maintain a positive work identity without being subject to overt surveillance. This, however, is often outright rejected by many employers, demonstrating a lack of trust, for even the smallest of time frames, except where legally obligated: “*I just asked if I could go and do the last hour and half at home and I were told no, I had to stay there*” (Sarah, Mainstream). Although working from home reduces the company's ability to observe daily performance, there are other surveillance techniques which may be used to assess role fulfilment (i.e. times logged on and off a Virtual Private Network). Working from home was seen by many as a way to overcome the physical and attitudinal barriers they faced, as it allowed more flexibility for those who need extra time, longer breaks, or less time travelling the workplace to successfully fulfil their job role.

5.2.3. Bodily performance

As discussed above, one of the biggest barriers that respondents faced was being held accountable to dominant able-bodied and masculine norms which many organisations are built upon. The intra-action of human bodies and the material environment was also found to affect the work ability for many of the respondents which was evident in both the interview

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data and experienced during the participant observations. Even in organisations that sought to disrupt these exclusionary practices there was still evidence of performance management. For instance, as witnessed during participant observations some of the respondents endured difficulties when intra-acting with the material aspects of their job, such as unwrapping or sealing products, which affected their work performance because of their impairment (i.e. motor functions being slower, arthritic joints). Boris (Sheltered) discussed his frustrations during his interview on how he was micro-managed by staff team leaders:

“yesterday Mohammad had me doing those pens getting them out of the bags... [I] saw he was watching me ...like he does...from over there...he comes over and says “Hey Boris...why are you just picking one up a time?...you can do three at a time or four at a time”....So he sped me up that way, and then after lunch, he comes over and he says to me “why have I only done one box when what's his name over there has managed two in that time... so why haven't I managed two?”...I just said to him “well you know sorry... I’m doing them right... that is the point”.” (Boris, Sheltered)

Deconstructing the above anecdote, there are several factors that form the assemblage that affected the intra-action of Boris with other bodies, the organisation and the material environment that have given rise to this particular experience, including:

- the use of Boris’ body to perform the job role which was impeded because of symptoms of a brain injury that slowed his motor responses;
- a nearing deadline of the product Boris was working on was creating more pressure on the senior staff because of the volume of work taken on at the workshop (related to the Christmas holidays);
- the observations of team leaders noting the different level of pace between workers;
- the team leader’s lack of consideration for Boris’s ability for this particular job; and
- the difficulties in Boris’ ability to effectively use the physical materials needed for the job, including adhesive tape, cardboard boxes, box opener, metal pens in plastic sleeves, and plastic gloves.

All these factors led to the team leader increasing the pressure on the workers. It was surprising to me that senior members of the staff failed to consider how a workers’ performance can be affected by their impairment. In this instance Mohammad failed understand how the material objects of a particular job, tools, and work station would affect the performance of Boris. By comparing Boris’ performance to another worker this resulted

in unrealistic bodily expectations that performatively enacted his disability as a form of oppression.

A number of mainstream and sheltered employees noted during their interview that they experienced bodily pain, extreme fatigue, and/or stress which was attributed to their impairment. However, they explained that these experiences were exacerbated by their daily intra-actions with their sociomaterial world, such as travelling to work or the job role requirements. Specific to the participant observations at Able-Industries, the experience of pain was not always verbalised but was observable through behaviours, body language (e.g. rolling of shoulders, holding places of discomfort, stretching sore muscles, readjusting body position frequently) and noises of pain (e.g. gasps and grunts). For example, I noted how individuals positioned their bodies in their physical environment and the material objects within the space, including choosing more comfortable seats or fidgeting on uncomfortable seats. On reflecting on my own and others experiences of the daily work practices at Able-Industries, particularly when I was working in a team of other workers¹⁸ on the same jobs for a number of days, I found the following. The pace of the job was more demanding depending on the work pace of those in front or behind you; how familiar you were with the job; how free or stiff the material objects of the job were (e.g. stiff inner carton of a gift box was difficult for me and others to remove); and the repetitive actions of the same job could lead to muscle overuse which slowed down everyone's work performance as the day progressed. Additional material-discursive factors that affected the intra-actions in the workplace included:

- the temperature within the working environment and how this affected body function (numb hand and feet in cold temperature; dehydration and bodily fatigue in hot temperatures);
- surveillance (or not) of productivity by the management team and its effect on work behaviour (e.g. mistakes being made due to feeling nervous);
- physical ability over time (e.g. tiredness, pain);
- the bodies intra-action with work tools (e.g. comfort of seats, table height,); and
- social intra-action between member of the team working on the job.

¹⁸ For example on one occasion the process of unpackaging and boxing up pen sets, each person was assigned one part of the job (i.e. removing pens from sleeve; placing warranty in the gift box; placing pens in gift box; placing box in packaging; placing retail label on packaging) and passing it on to the next person until all the processes were complete.

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The above analysis indicates how important it is to consider how embodiment and work performance was the result of by a number of entangled factors that mutually affect one another.

The daily commute, and the day-to-day job roles often affected the respondents physical and cognitive abilities in the workplace. Furthermore, these negatively affected their ability to perform additional duties in domestic spaces including cooking, cleaning and childcare. The observations and interview data revealed that this affected the women more than men, as the women discussed how they did or did not complete socially defined feminine chores. Often the women in the studies discuss how “*hard work*” their jobs were but work was prioritised because of the social and economic ramifications of unemployment (e.g. isolations and/or poverty). The women in particular discussed how they have to choose which sociomaterial space (i.e. home or work) was prioritised, which created an imbalanced work-life divide (Bloom, 2016). Some women chose to ‘give up’ some or all of their traditional feminine domestic duties: “*I don't do any cleaning up...prepare any meals, I don't do anything*” (Sharon, Mainstream). This was because all their “*effort*”, “*energy*” and “*thought process went into work*” (Sophie, Mainstream). The women thus performatively reject the gendered social norms inherent to domestic spaces in order to be able to work. Here energy, a personal resource that is precious and unique to each individual, is often wholly spent during their intra-action within organisational spaces which often negatively affected their embodied experiences within the home environment: “*I just lie on the settee and die when I get home*” (Sharon, Mainstream). However, for many participants working was a way of negating the oppressive discourses of disability as it gave them a sense of self-worth when fulfilling an organisational role. For others, such as Penny, her energy reserves were the main barrier to career progression within a university:

“to get promotion [to professor] you need to produce high-level papers, and because I was so tired at the end of everyday...I couldn't put in the extra work, so at a weekend I just slept or rested, where other people were working.” (Penny, Mainstream)

The assessment criteria in Penny's workplace performatively enacted able-bodied and masculine norms, such as working long hours, were not aligned with her abilities which put her at a disadvantage compared to her able-bodied colleagues. Her career progression was hindered by the highly pressured and productivity-driven higher education institution. The latter practice performatively enact her disability as a form of oppression (i.e. preventing promotion). Although she did publish papers in high ranking journals she was not able to do

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this consistently, and this was at odds with the quantitative performative measures enacted by the university. As well as encountering the barriers discussed above, many of the respondents also encountered material/physical barriers in the spaces they worked and wider society which are discussed next.

5.2.4. Physical space/access

As indicated above the embodied experiences of the participants is relationally affected by the practises enacted during their intra-actions between spaces, other bodies and material objects. The analysis found that legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010, that purports to enforce equality for disabled people within sociomaterial spaces is largely implemented without consultation with those who need accessible spaces. For example, a number of those interviewed had experienced exclusion when entering and manoeuvring inside of a building, both inside and outside the workplace. These included, building security systems (e.g. ID swipe door access; mechanical steel code lock) that could not be easily used by those who used wheelchairs or crutches, or those who were physically unable to pull/push open the doors without discomfort/pain; and steep ramps with objects such as a wardrobe inappropriately placed that could cause potential injury on navigating the ramp in a wheelchair. For example, Jennifer explained:

“we were originally in a younger [sic] building but they moved us in to an old Victorian building...full of swing door that had security passes on it, which...you have to swipe your badge to get through the swing doors...which you then had to push...trying to manage that on double crutches...there was no chance.” (Jennifer, Mainstream)

Sometimes it was the way in which the physical space was designed that was incompatible with their physical abilities, for instance Sarah (Mainstream) explained during her interview that in her last workplace she “*struggled with the steps or even the ramp to get to the toilet*”, a plight made worse during her pregnancy. For others, such as Jane and Sharon the use of technology such as a mobility car was of paramount importance for employment participation and maintaining their health:

“I did have a [mobility] car...because if I took the bus or...the train I could get infections and things like that” (Jane, Mainstream)

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Others such as Sophie (Mainstream) and Colin (Mainstream) found the exertion moving around work buildings was a “*problem*” as the distance to the canteen, nearby cafes/shop, meeting rooms, or different classrooms was too much for them on a daily basis. So they would bring a packed lunch to eat at their desk, miss inaccessible meetings, or would negotiate rooms on the bottom floor. Sharon’s (Mainstream) health advisor job entailed visiting local health/community centres for set periods of time and as a result, despite working for the NHS, she explained that “*there has always been issues*” in every building she works in such as disability parking and disability access inside the building. Each of the above examples demonstrates the exclusionary enactment of space (e.g. organisational building architecture, security practices, and support aids) that have been designed to fit and accommodate able-bodied individuals (Foster and Wass, 2012). This problematises the implementation of material support without consulting the intended users. As discussed above, the lack of moral support along with unaccommodating spaces performatively enacts disability as a form of oppression as they are prevented from being able to access, move or work within these spaces despite their desire and skills to perform the job role. These experiences can influence the decision to remain or leave a place of employment to seek more inclusive spaces that do not evoke such negative embodied experiences.

To summarise, the data analysis identified a number of material-discursive practices that enacted physical and attitudinal barriers which affected the disabled workers’ ability to enter, maintain and progress in employment. These included:

- employers who would not alter their organisational practices to be more inclusive to their employee’s needs;
- the performative enaction of disability through negative perceptions and attitudes which excluded them from sociomaterial spaces;
- being held accountable and judged on able-bodied and gendered performative norms which resulted in scrutiny, energy depletion and lack of promotion opportunities; and
- the physical difficulties experienced in navigating material spaces that are not inclusive for all.

However, not all experiences were negative and there were examples of resistance to oppressive practices, such as challenging others assumptions, which is discussed in section 5.5. The effect of support mechanisms on the experiences of disabled women and men is discussed next.

5.3. Practical and work-based support

Support was a recurring theme within the data, although the type of support required differed according to individual needs, the type of employment and the physical workspace. The theme is split into four sections: the importance of workplace support; engagement with workers; organisational environment; and managing expectations.

5.3.1. The importance of support

Having a suitable work environment was vital for the productivity, well-being and job satisfaction of those interviewed. Overall, material support was the main type of support requested and generally provided, as many employers were aware of their legal obligation under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Equality Act (2010). Almost all of those interviewed had been given some form of material support, if they needed it, such as personalised chairs, desks, or adapted equipment office equipment to physically aid them in their job. During the participant observations at Able-Industries, it was noted that some workers had customised chairs designed to support their body: these were provided through Access to Work or personally brought in by workers. However, I observed and experienced that the majority of the chairs provided for other workers were not designed for comfort such as wooden stools and various types of basic office/computer chairs. These chairs did not offer lumbar support, creating discomfort for me and others in the workplace. If the shop floor was busy there were fewer opportunities to swap to a more suitable chair which affected the productivity of the workers if they were in pain or discomfort. It was comical at times when someone left work before the end of the day, such as lunch time or mid-afternoon, and the worker had been sat on one of the comfier chairs, often multiple people attempted to claim the chair for the rest of the working day to improve their discomfort. Similarly, the tables used for specific jobs were often too short or too high, relative the height of the body, which negatively affected an individual's posture throughout the day, causing pain and discomfort. Material object thus have agency to affect the embodiment of human bodies.

One of the more advanced technical support systems that was requested for use by participants in both studies was the Nuance Dragon speech recognition software, an expensive piece of technology that converted spoken words into text. However, many felt the burden of requesting this as many "*organisations don't have the money anymore 'cos everyone's [budget is] cut*" (Sophie, Mainstream). There was also the worry of the accommodation request being rejected if employers did not believe they needed access to it (a form of biopolitics). For Sophie, the provision of the software would have made her day-to-day work tasks much easier by not having to write notes or type on a keyboard, and it

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could have potentially influenced her decision to leave the organisation. Joyce demonstrates the exclusionary practices than can be enacted during intra-actions between staff and the workspace when requesting expensive support systems:

“I’m lucky in that Access to Work have given me the software here...but if I was going into a company and you were faced with an unknown...bill...as in three or four thousand for IT, you're not sure if... [the] systems you use will link in with this new thing...you suddenly think it's not worth [it], I can't be bothered you know...the IT guys gonna have to work with this girl for days and you know... there is an able-bodied person here I might as well have them.” (Joyce, Sheltered)

Within the above assemblage there are number of factors namely funding, bodily ability, technology, uncertainty and able-bodied norms that coalesce to affect how requests for assistive technology can result in exclusionary practices which reinforce the oppressive social norms of disability. Although the use of technology, such as speech to text software, can have a transformative effect on the ability to perform particular job roles for disabled workers, the access to it can be restricted by managers/organisations.

Material support, however, was only one aspect of the support needed. Moral support, a form of emotional understanding and encouragement without enacting discriminatory practices, was of equal importance to the respondents. Many were given material support at the start of their employment tenure, but this was usually as far as the support consultation went. There were no follow-up assessments or consideration for how their physical and mental well-being was affected by the ongoing practices enacted within the workplace, which most were struggling with: *“they didn't ask if there was anything that they could support with”* (Zoe, Brad’s wife, Mainstream). Often individuals knew what support they needed and/or wanted to make the workplace more inclusive to their needs such as a designated *“space for people to go and relax... it's incredibly important to re-centre yourself”* (Colin, Mainstream). Others believed there should be *“regular meetings just to check that everything is ok”* (Sarah, Mainstream). Many did not feel like they could ask for help or request additional accommodations for fear of the repercussions of being seen to be struggling and evoking the *“stigma”* of a disability, which could lead to them losing their job.

A lack of available support was one of the main reasons why individuals contemplated leaving or left their place of employment as it reinforced able-bodied and masculine social norms which many could not uphold. As Sarah stated: *“if I have an off day*

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if I'm aching or if I'm hurting... I didn't feel like I had that support...or didn't have enough faith in 'em to back me up when I needed it" (Sarah, Mainstream). Problems arise, then, when organisations and individuals fail to intra-act with each other and enact a mutual ethics of care (Lindebaum et al., 2017). Some of the respondents went as far as complete career changes, from physical roles to office-based jobs, in order to overcome the barriers they faced and seek a more supportive work environment. This is an example of the participants engaging in identity work to mitigate the conflict (i.e. oppression) they faced attributed to their disability and/or gender in their previous work environment. The level of support across the research sample is discussed in the next section.

5.3.2. Engagement with workers

There were some differences in support reported across the two types of employment which are explored throughout this section. The support provided at Able-Industries was both material and moral and often took place ad hoc during multiple daily intra-actions. For example, Hayley (Sheltered) stated during her interview: *"I have struggled with some jobs and they've had to just move me off that particular job and... onto another one"*. The team leaders supported the move, which meant that she did not feel under pressure to continue working on a difficult job. The observations at Able-Industries demonstrated how at different times and in multiple spaces throughout the workshop different types of jobs (i.e. matter) were generally available (sometimes four or five different jobs). This allowed the (re)allocation of tasks to individuals on the basis of their ability: this is an example of how 'spacetime-matter' relations was seen to occur in practice to affect the embodied experience of those in the workplace which was subject to constant fluctuations over time (Barad, 2014). I also observed how Mary, who had to place trimmer wires into a clear plastic tube, was having difficulties taking the stiff plastic lid off the tubes because of her arthritis. Nadeemah, the team leader, noticed her difficulty and spent time taking the plastic lids off to help her and she continued to assess if she was having any more issues throughout the day. Mary's bodily limitations (her arthritic hands) affected her intra-action the material object she was working with (the stiffness of lids). However, rather than let Mary struggle, or reprimand her failure to complete a task, I was pleased to see Nadeemah provide support to help her with the job role without repercussions: this is an example of an interdependent relationship. Throughout the data there are examples of the respondents drawing on the experiences of being independent (reliance on the self) and interdependent (reliance on another object/body) with other people, material space and material objects in their everyday working lives. Critical posthumanist feminist and disability materialist scholars, such as Garland-Thomson

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(2011) and Clinkenbeard (2020), have drawn on this concept of interdependence to highlight the relational element of embodiment. For example, Donna (Mainstream) who works as a sale assistant in a bakery noted how she was limited in what roles she could fulfil: *“they want bakers, but I can't do it because I can't lift the trays”* and she discussed having an interdependent relationships with other workers who would assist her with her role through the day, such as asking others to use the bread machine for her. The way in which objects are designed can therefore performatively enact bodies as disabled if they cannot use the objects in the intended way.

The observations at Able-Industries revealed that the support practices were more *pro-active* in supporting their employees on a daily basis. Whereas the support practices in mainstream organisations were often *reactive* after making formal support requests: *“I managed to get a lot of my adjustments just by talking to the people that I worked with”* (Penny, Mainstream). Requesting accommodations in mainstream employment was often after a period of attempting to self-manage the embodied affects of the exclusionary practices enacted during their daily intra-actions. This included making their own adjustments, such as taking annual leave to rest instead of sick leave or working from home outside their working hours, before asking for support when they had *“reached breaking point”* (Penny, Mainstream). Many of the participants would attempt to work for a period of time to see how they managed their job role before approaching managers or HR for some alterations to the workspace or organisational practices. For some this strategy was used if they chose to conceal their disability and not draw attention to their difference. The situation became more complex, however, when both the employee and employer did not know how to address the spatial and temporal issues that affected the negative experiences of the worker:

“they didn't know what to do...I think if I'd have said in a meeting ‘I can't teach’, well I did say I wanted afternoons... they were fine about that ‘cos they then knew what to do...but the trouble is I didn't know what I wanted them to do either.” (Penny, Mainstream)

The support systems in place, then, are important to create an inclusive environment so that the employees’ do not feel that their disability is seen to be pejorative and they feel valuable assets to the organisation. If the organisation adapts the sociomaterial space and the practices enacted within the space, such as the time and locations of meetings, it creates an inclusive ‘fit’ between the person and the social, political, and material aspects of the space. If, on the other hand the individual is required to adapt to the sociomaterial space and the one-size-fits-all practices enacted within this space, this results in a ‘misfit’ between their bodily

ability and their environment. This performatively enacts disability as a form of oppression (Garland-Thomson, 2011).

5.3.3. Organisational environment

Those who had previously worked in mainstream employment prior to sheltered employment stated that the support practices they received differed greatly between the two types of employment. Specifically, the relational intra-actions between bodies, spaces and material objects at Able-Industries was discussed in interviews to induce a “*calmer*”, “*nicer*” and “*less pressure[d]*” sociomaterial environment, compared to their mainstream employment experiences. The managers at Able-Industries, were aware of the oppressive practices that their employees face and actively sought to, where possible, mitigate these to create a supportive work environment, such as not subjecting employees to able-bodied and masculine norms of productivity. For instance, shop floor staff were told to work “*to the best of your capability*” (Sally, Sheltered) which allowed individuals to feel valued and not judged against a standard norm. I found that more often than not the workers at Able-Industries were judged on their own capabilities rather than enforcing a one-size-fit-all performative expectation. In contrast, most of those in mainstream employment felt under pressure to perform to able-bodied norms despite being given support from their employers. For example, Jennifer (Mainstream), stated during her interview that “*if I know what a lot of disabled people are like it will be more than their 100 per cent...they will be doing 200 per cent and totally knocking themselves out to... keep up with everybody else*”. As indicated in this quote working beyond a body’s maximum comfort level comes at a physical/cognitive cost (“*knocking themselves out*”).

In some cases, support mechanisms (e.g. a support worker) can also be resisted or challenged by co-workers if they felt they were being treated differently and believed the disabled employee was receiving preferential treatment:

“if they'd have understood that the access to work wasn't to help all of them generally... and it was just for me, it might have been easier because they kept nicking my helper” (Linda, Mainstream)

However, it is important to note that not all requests for support, in both types of employment, were granted. In some instances, the lack of available support led to respondents leaving their job to find a more suitable job role. In contrast to above, the mainstream employee interviewed felt let down by the rigid organisational policies which prevented them from being adequately accommodated:

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“because we had a flexible working style, we could work at home and that, people were working around their disabilities...and using the flexibility, as their adjustment, but that flexibility is open for everybody, and so actually they’re discriminating in the sense that they are not doing anything, for those people...they just go “oh well you are coping”...and actually that wasn't the case at all.” (Penny, Mainstream)

Penny further highlights the lack of investment in the workforce, indicative of the institution’s failure to consider the diversity of their workforce. Nor how organisational practices and the social norms embedded within the sociomaterial space affected their employees. Although some workers were able to self-accommodate their needs through the flexible working arrangements available, the organisation was not aware that some of the workers needed such support. This is an ethical consequence of neoliberal capitalism which favours the success of the institution over the well-being of the workers (Arruzza et al., 2019).

The physical environment, the material objects and other bodies present within organisational spaces was seen to have a relational affect on the day-to-day intra-actions for the participants. During observations at Able Industries I witnessed that where available the team leaders preferred shop floor staff to use machines to boost production to offset lower production elsewhere. For example, the fruit and veg disks machine (operated by staff) made approximately 8000 disks a day compared 2000 disks a day from staff who manually made them. However, I and other workers became frustrated on packaging the disks as the disks made via the machine were of significantly lower quality to those made by hand (i.e. one out of every three was a reject). It became clear, however, that quantity over quality was favoured by Muhammad (Team Leader), despite it making it harder for those who were packaging the products as they were having to tell the team leaders that they were having to reject a lot of them. On closer inspection Nadeemah (Team Leader) contradicted Muhammad telling workers be more careful on using the machine, keeping in mind the quality of end product, rather than just operating the machine without care. The continued preference for the use of technology caused frustration and anxiety when we had to spend additional time rejecting products or correcting them. The senior staff at Able-Industries appeared to ignore the complaints of other workers that some of the machines used for jobs were faulty and less effective than the workers manual actions. For example, during one participant observations, on asking what Henry was working on that day he complained about having to remeasure all the trimmer wires. He stated that the equipment used for placing the metal tab central

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onto the trimmer wires “*was destined for the tip as it was not working correctly...[and despite] being looked at on a numerous occasions it could not be fixed so should be got rid of it*” (Field note). For other participants, the use of assistive technology was affected by the presence of other people and the noise they made. Sharon (Mainstream) explained in her interview that her speech to text software was very sensitive, for instance the microphone would pick up people talking outside of her office which disrupted her work. The above examples demonstrate how the intra-actions between human bodies and technology can fail in their intended use to assist productivity (Barla, 2016). The sociomaterial effects of managing expectations within the workplace is discussed next.

5.3.4. Managing expectations

Managing support expectations occurred in two ways. First, it involved the spatial or temporal concessions that employers would make to their disabled employees, such as reducing working hours or “*allowing*” employees to work from home “*temporally*”. However, participants noted managers would “*obviously*” want them “*back in the office eventually*” or they felt they would have to “*leave*”:

“they were talking about at one point in allowing me to work from home for a wee bit, but they would obviously still want me back in the office eventually.”
(Jennifer, Mainstream)

In another example, Joyce (Sheltered, Manager) claimed in her interview that the social norms embedded within recruitment practices such as the way questions are phrased are problematic for those with a learning disability or neurodiverse individuals “*as they really have no idea what you're talking about*”. However, she notes that “*giving someone a clue as to what you want them to say*” is seen to be problematic “*but they need those prompts*” (Joyce, Sheltered, Manager). These anecdotes highlight how able-bodied norms are heavily embedded within employment practices where employers expect everyone to be assessed and perform their job role in the same way. However, by not altering organisational practices to accommodate a diverse workforce this reinforces the social injustices experienced by those socially deemed ‘other’ (Foster, 2018).

Second, many employers fail to acknowledge their workers’ limits nor their requests for flexible types of working, such as working from home. Many of the mainstream research participants were negatively affected by their employer’s “*lack of understanding*” that their disability was long-term and potentially degenerative, and as much as they would have liked

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to 'be cured' that was not the case. Their employers therefore misunderstood, or refused to provide, the accommodations that they needed on a temporary or permanent basis:

"I only ever asked once to go home and work from home, and the shift ended at seven o'clock at night...it was about half-past-five that I really started feeling really drained and what not and my back were hurting, my legs were hurting, so I just asked if I could go and do the last hour and half at home and I were told no, I had to stay there, so I was like "right ok", so I stayed there, and I think it was the week after I just broke down to my team leader and I said "I can't do this"...I don't think there were an understanding there of "yeah you know, she is struggling". (Sarah, Mainstream)

The above intra-action between the employee and employer was mutually affective as they were both frustrated by the other not accommodating the other. The intra-action was however affected by capitalist organisational policies that create disembodied workspaces, evidenced by the lack of personal investment to assess their employees needs and well-being. Instead the focus is on maintaining optimal performance and if performance measures, such as annual reviews, assess the employers are not working hard and/or fast enough they will begin procedures to either regain productivity or instigate removal of the individual.

In other circumstances, not all of the support offered was accepted by the interviewees. For example, Jennifer's hip operation left her on double crutches and her employer offered her a co-worker to help her moving around (a form of interdependence). Jennifer explained that the intention was for this co-worker to "*follow*" and "*escort*" her to different organisational spaces including the toilet until she "*improved*", which Jennifer knew "*wasn't going to happen*". Although the employer was offering practical support, from a moral point of view this would have altered Jennifer and her colleague's relationship from being professional to a carer and patient dynamic (placing both into vulnerable positions) (Butler, 2005; Mik-Meyer, 2016). Jennifer at this point chose to take ill-health retirement as she knew she was not going to improve, as expected by her employer. Similar to Jennifer, a number of participants exited their jobs through early ill-health retirement, redundancy, or unemployment when their intra-actions within and between multiple sociomaterial spaces became unmanageable due to exclusionary material constraints or embodied fatigue (emotional/physical burn out).

To summarise, support mechanisms are relational and entangled with material-discursive practices which affected how much access to support the respondents had. It appeared that some research participants were less willing to ask for support for fear that

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their employees would draw on and enact oppressive practice which would exclude them from the workplace. Although material support could provide a more inclusive work environment, many wanted and/or needed additional moral support throughout their employment in order for changes in their circumstance to be actively considered on an ongoing basis. There is also a clear difference between the types of employment, with Able-Industries being more pro-active in their support mechanisms and mainstream employers being more reactive. The subsequent theme explores the respondents' experiences of constructing bodily/cognitive/neurological disability as difference.

5.4. Performative enactment of difference

This theme explores how disability and gender are performatively enacted during intra-actions and how material-discursive practices within sociomaterial spaces affected their sense of self. The theme is discussed across four subthemes: identity construction, employment difficulties, the importance of work for well-being, and the intersection of disability and gender.

5.4.1. Identity construction

Being seen as “*different*” from others because of their impairments affected the participants' sense of self and their embodied intra-actions within and between multiple sociomaterial spaces. Those with a physiological, cognitive or neurological impairment from birth, or from a young age, discussed feeling “*ashamed*” and “*inadequate*” compared with “*everyone else*” who was not disabled (Watson, 2002). Feeling different or as Sally (Sheltered) states “*hard done to*” throughout their lives, or post-impairment in later life, by non-disabled people was commonly reported:

“when I were younger...I were kinda ashamed of who I were, you know what was wrong with me and stuff and you feel inadequate to everyone else, and now I suppose I'm married and I have got a little boy and...you look at everything completely different... I am proud of who I am.” (Sarah, Mainstream)

The above quote demonstrate how embodiment is relationally affected by the sociomaterial context and the historical and cultural practices that pervade society over time. These practices performatively reproduce the oppressive practices that exclude particular bodies. For instance, the “social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism” is continuously reinforced through visual media advertisements that infiltrates all aspects of everyday life (Haraway, 2006, p. 122). Drawing on and enacting these dominant practices which associate disability, women, ethnicity or class with inferiority leads to these individuals receiving a

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lower social status compared to those labelled ‘normal’ or ‘ideal’ which oppresses their capacity to intra-act within and between sociomaterial spaces (e.g. school and work).

As discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, dominant and binary material-discursive practices within sociomaterial spaces are often left unchallenged, and they continuously performatively enact the oppressive and pejorative dimension of disability, gender, race, classes etc. This was similarly found in the data, as the participants draw on the implicit parallel of how they were not ‘normal’ materially and discursively across multiple sociomaterial spaces. This continuously affected their embodiment when comparing what their body can do and how their abilities differ to others:

“I don't feel like I'm being treated different but sometimes I do feel like I'm different to other people...sometimes I wish... why can't I just be like anybody else...why did it happen to me.” (Donna, Mainstream)

The participants also note what affects the performative enactment of disability or gender across multiple sociomaterial spaces, for instance, (in)accessible buildings or rigid/flexible work policies. Sarah, for example, explained how during intra-actions with other people in sociomaterial spaces such as “*walking down the street*” people looked, or rather prolongingly stared, at her body, particular how she moved (e.g. “*limping*”) or her unusual glasses:

“you kinda get this hatred for people...like if I'm walking down the street and I'm limping and I see someone look at me or my glasses...as they are going past [they're] staring at you, and you don't know where to put yourself... and then before you know it you've got three or four people sat in one café or something, looking at you and its awful.” (Sarah, Mainstream)

This anecdote highlights the historical power imbalance inherent within binary discourses that performatively bring into being particular bodies within society, with able-bodied individuals historically ascribed more power enacting oppressive practices (e.g. the ‘non-disabled gaze’; Loja et al., 2013). A body being pejoratively scrutinised and subject to oppressive practices based on the quantitative assessment of bodily normality has occurred over time in different spaces. This has led to the continued performative reinforcement of the hierarchical binary norms (Slorach, 2016).

The enactment of inclusive or oppressive practices within home spaces also had an impact on the materialisation of bodies as disabled or gendered. For example, Frank (Sheltered) and Indra (Sheltered) are both Deaf from birth but had very different upbringings, which affected how they connected and communicated with others outside of

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the home. Indra was born into a Deaf family where all members of her family were Deaf and she was taught to “*be proud of myself, proud of my Deafness, proud of my family, and that’s the way I’ve carried on in life.*” (Indra, Sheltered). Indra’s intra-actions with others and the practices she and her family enact disrupts the dominant able-bodied-disabled binary, with disability not being as a disadvantage. Indra, through her positive experiences within the home has maintained a positive identity through her continued identity work that rejects the pejorative discourses of Deafness. This led Indra to believe that it was those who were not d/Deaf who had ‘problems’ in communicating with her and not the other way around. Frank, however, explained he was born into a hearing family who “*never learnt sign*” so he “*felt a bit alone*” especially then they decided to send him away to a specialist deaf boarding school at the age of four. This was a performative enactment of oppression that defined his Deafness as pejorative and signified his sensory difference from his family. For those who grew up in a family where no one else had a disability being ‘different’ affected their self-identity in a negative way. For example, Sally (Sheltered) reports: “*I was sort of like the black sheep of the family*”. Sally compared herself to her immediate family’s accomplishments and believed she had ‘failed’ and was “*not good enough*”. Being different or feeling different from others had an emotional impact on all those who took part in the research.

For those who acquired a disability later in life through injury or health condition, this change had a significant disruptive impact on their intra-actions within other people and social spaces which affected their embodied experiences (Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). Colin’s (Mainstream) back injury and subsequent back surgeries led to chronic pain and reduced mobility. This consequently led to a change in economic circumstances as he left his senior role as a commercial manager (i.e. economic privilege) and became unemployed (i.e. economic insecurity) and in receipt of benefits as his work role could not be adapted to his new bodily abilities. Colin’s inability to continue working prevents the enactment of the “*old fashioned*” masculine and able-bodied societal norm (i.e. Colin’s “*desire*”) that men should be the “*provider*” for their family which is entrenched with historic and cultural (i.e. able-bodied and masculine) practices. For example, Colin stated: “*I can’t take it away I just have this desire to provide*”. Colin’s need to performatively enact the masculine ideal of being the breadwinner is constrained by his change in bodily reality and the oppressive practices of disability that prevent him from being able to provide as he did before (Pini and Conway, 2017). He thus endures a conflict in his ability to continue to enact a hegemonic form of gender because of his bodily change due to his impairment (Shuttleworth et al., 2012). These oppressive practices also affected the intra-actions with his colleagues who attempted to reduce his pain to “*nothing but a twinge*” in his back and pressured him to shrug

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it off, get his “*ass back to work now*” and embrace his masculinity. The multiple changes and disruptions to Colin’s intra-actions with his own body, his bodily exclusion to his work environment and the negative affect this had on his home environment, particularly his marriage breakdown, affected how he felt about himself. This created a dissonance in who he is now, and who he was then, which resulted in “*a fairly major breakdown... because I’d literally been into work one day and never did go back to work...and there were lots of things going on and I had quite a bad break down*” (Colin, Mainstream). Many of the respondents endured complex transitions such as adjusting to their new bodily illness or injury, leaving their places employment, a reduction in social contact outside the home, and the breakdown of relationships.

Similarly, Sasha (Mainstream) mentally struggled with her physical and financial changes and claimed she knew “*why suicide is very high within our community*” when a person’s independence “*is taken away... and there's nothing you can do about it*”. As evidenced above, the transition from able-bodied to disabled is relationally affected by an assemblage of factors that occur during the intra-actions within and between multiple sociomaterial spaces. Furthermore, the inability to continue working added to this distress, as they were subject to oppressive practices enacted by other bodies (e.g. partners), with comments such as “*I can’t live with a spaz and a scrounger*” (Colin, Mainstream). Both Colin and Sasha’s embodied experiences and their ongoing becoming are affected by practices that performatively enact the discursive labels attached to their bodies. Colin, however, is likely to experience privilege as a white middle-class man due to dominant norms embedded within society, compared with Sasha, who is subject to unfavourable intra-actions because of her gender, her black skin, and lower social class.

For many participants the daily intra-action between their body and other bodies, the physical space, their job role, and the material objects they encounter resulted in experiences of emotional and physical fatigue, such as feeling “*exhausted*” (Sophie, Mainstream). Many also put themselves “*under pressure tryn’a be normal*” by managing their own and other’s expectations of their ability against the behavioural norms of the spaces by “*trying not look vulnerable*” (Sophie Mainstream). They also wanted to prove their abilities:

“I am an average person, and a normal person, so I can get around, I may be a bit slower than everyone else...but I can still do [it], because I wouldn’t have gone for that job if I didn’t think that I could do it.” (Sarah, Mainstream)

The assumption that the ideal able-bodied worker is ‘normal’ is evident the dominant practices that are embedded within all aspects of organisational spaces, the material objects

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placed within building (e.g. phones, desks, chairs), and organisational policies and practices. The analysis of the data across both studies, as discussed above, revealed that many participants at some point in their introspection compared themselves to this concept of 'normality'. This included what was seen to be 'normal' for that particular job/space or more broadly drawing on societal norms of productivity.

The data suggests there is a physiological/material element of *looking* 'normal' - the visible aspect of normality on how individual are seen and/or see themselves - and a cognitive/biological element (i.e. functionality of the body) of *being/feeling* 'normal' - the invisible aspect of normality on how bodies behave in particular spaces. Some of the women interviewed adopted strategies, such as using or removing material objects to look the part and maintain a positive personal or organisational identity: this a form of material identity work (Symon and Pritchard, 2015).

"when I worked in London I had to wear a suit every day... up in the morning get a shower...have to wash your hair, dry your hair, put your clothes on... all of that and it's tremendous pressure... just to look normal really ... I just struggled through it... at the housing organisation...then I had my drop foot [a symptom of MS]... I couldn't wear loafers or if I did I couldn't bend in them...so I had to buy shoes with a low heel...with a strap so it was all these things of trickery." (Sophie, Mainstream)

"I'd always cover-up, or if I can, I always cover my legs because my right leg is thinner than my left leg so straight away that draws physical attention to it, then if I walk anywhere, I'd try do it so people can't see me walking because then they'll see the limp, or I cover my face, or, I take me glasses off, 'cos I didn't want people to see that." (Sarah, Mainstream)

Looking 'normal' was deemed important to many of the women even if they did not *feel* 'normal'. There is an additional entanglement of gender, as they discuss the importance of maintaining a feminine image in line with gendered social norms, to detract from their impairment(s). By altering their intra-actions with other people and using/removing material objects (e.g., their glasses or wearing low-heeled strapped shoes) they would disassociate their body from the disabled category to avoid oppressive practices such as name calling. Nonetheless, as is discussed below in section 5.5, many participants resisted and challenged their own and other's expectations of what it means to be 'normal' or to be disabled.

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The performative enactment of disability, gender, sex, class, or ethnicity as a form of oppression is also entangled with other practices, such as geopolitics, biopolitics, and medical and scientific procedures. Medical and scientific advancements, for example, define/label/diagnose (non)human bodies as being different. These medical labels contribute to the oppressive practices of disability, sex, and gender as bodies are assessed against a quantitative curve of existence; anomalies are subsequently pathologized which historically has had ethical consequences (e.g. prejudice, segregation, eugenics) (Barad, 2007). The medical sciences have also developed the technological capacity to perform (and consequently deny) life changing and lifesaving treatments for (non)human bodies (Braidotti, 2013a). For instance some of the participants explained how they were a hybrid of human (organic) and non-human (in-organic) in that they have non-organic matter within their bodies that was placed there through operations making them cyborg like (Haraway, 2006):

“I’ve got nuts and bolts in my back.” (Colin, Mainstream)

“I’ve got a metal plate in there [arm] and a metal plate in my jaw...so if I walk through customs now all the bells go off.” (Boris, Sheltered)

It is important to note however these bodily changes/modifications were made in attempts to ‘fix’ bodies to their previous ‘normal’ state, thus reinforcing the medical model of disability that abnormal bodies need fixing. Others, as discussed above, were cyborg like in their reliance on technology to perform their job roles.

5.4.2. *Employment difficulties*

Despite enjoying their job, in some instances there was a limit to how their job or work environment could be altered to accommodate their needs and vice versa. For example, Linda, Sharon, Jennifer and Sarah all had to leave their mainstream jobs due to their ‘difficulties’ in performing their work tasks. The limits of their physical bodies was affected by numerous factors including being unable to fulfil the required job role, such as being able to stand for eight hours if a hairdresser; the work environment being too physical, such as being unable bend the body without pain to reach various machine parts; difficulties in fulfilling multiple roles (e.g. work and childcare) due a lack of physical energy and/or pain. Linda discussed that she had to “*give up*” her job as a vet after she felt “*guilty*” in not being able to “*handle the animals*” which meant she could not fulfil her ethical obligation of her profession to provide good care. She disclosed that she changed jobs multiple times off her “*own back*”, noting it was her decision to leave, in order to find a workplace that could

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accommodate her abilities. During the data collection there was a sense of frustration from the participants with their own bodies, and the way in which jobs and society is organised when they discussed what that had to ‘sacrifice’ (i.e. careers, socialising, domestic roles) to manage their impairments.

Having a very specialised job, such as a vet (Linda) or hairdresser (Sharon), provides fewer opportunities for material adjustments and greater consequences (i.e. harm) in case of errors. Some participants changed jobs to positions related to their fields, for example Linda moved to teach at veterinary school, whereas Sharon left the profession of hairdressing and eventually became a health worker. Nonetheless, despite moving to new sociomaterial environments some participants still experienced difficulties in negotiating their day-to-day intra-actions with other people and material objects during their working activities. For example, some experienced frustration, pressure and/or discomfort when their disability was ‘forgotten’ or it was not considered how their abilities affected their ability to fulfil their patient-facing (or other face-to-face interaction) job role:

“I get annoyed with the people at work who put me on these lengthy shifts... I do ‘em, but I struggle with them... but it’s the patients that you are looking after, and you want to be nice and patient but when you are tired and stressed... I don’t think they are looking at that point of it, and I think that... they’ve got to be more aware of that.” (Judith, Mainstream)

One of the main frustrations raised was the lack of emotional or moral support, as many felt that their embodied experiences were not considered. This was more evident in mainstream employment where the respondent’s needs were overlooked in favour of maintaining organisational goals. Whereas the needs of those in supported employment were often prioritised (or equalised) to organisational goals. Judith (Mainstream), for example, worked for the NHS and felt that her ward sister could have done more to support her and prevent risks to the patients, despite the constraints experienced in the sector. Instead the work procedures and policies at Judith’s workplace appeared to be disembodied and dehumanised (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015). Others who experienced employment difficulties often made the decision to leave work after a leave of absence. For example, Sarah explains how she “*started not sleeping*” on thinking about returning to her team leader position following her maternity leave. Before, maternity leave she was treated poorly as her female manager did not consider or accept how her pregnancy affected her impairments and her job role: she knew this treatment would continue on returning whilst she learned to juggle multiple roles of being an employee and a mother. She ultimately decided she could not face returning due

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to the numerous exclusionary practices she faced prior to looking after a baby and physically recovering from upcoming operations and instead “*had a total career change*” (Sarah, Mainstream).

Employment difficulties in the form of disruptions were seen to occur on a number of occasions at Able-Industries for different reasons. Some of the workers with more severe learning disabilities, for example Anna, were particularly disruptive during both work hours and social activities. Anna had limited hearing and appeared to struggle with social etiquette. I often saw Anna invade the personal space of others and would ask people questions repeatedly and would not listen when asked to return to her work (including by members of staff). For example, during the observations I noted: “*Anna was talking right into Mike’s ears with his hearing aids, he did not like that and was looking really uncomfortable*” (Field note). I witnessed events like this regularly. It was particularly frustrating when team leaders appeared not to notice, and it mostly went unchecked until another worker - in this case Callum - made a complaint to one of the team leaders about Anna’s disruptive behaviour. These considerations convey some of the practical difficulties in employing a disabled person, and although there were times when behaviours such as this went unnoticed, incidents such as the above were dealt with on a case by case basis. Often this involved a conversation with the disruptive worker to make sure that they understood the negative impact of their actions, and sometimes involved moving a worker to a different table. What was important was that these incidents were not recorded as they might be in mainstream organisations. The management team were patient and understood that Anna did not fully understand that her behaviour was inappropriate, and therefore could neither hold her accountable nor exclude her due to dominant social norms. It was therefore important that staff had an awareness, understanding, and patience when engaging with disabled workers, such as those with a learning disability, in order to assess the situation and react accordingly.

5.4.3. Importance of work for well-being

For many participants employment not only improved their self-worth, but it also served as a distraction from their impairment symptoms or bodily limitations. Further to this, not only was work deemed important for economic self-sufficiency but also for emotional and psychological well-being:

“when I’m at home I’m a miserable git...when I’m at work, I feel like I’m achieving so I feel better...even though I’m just doing minutes, or you know...answering emails, at least I’m doing something rather than being laid on the settee at home.” (Sharon, Mainstream)

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For many of the participants, working and being physically present in the workplace is seen as a way of negating the oppressive discourses that are socially attached to their disability identity: *“you don’t really think about yourself as being disabled”* (Jennifer, Mainstream). Although many respondents discussed issues with travelling to the workplace and its impact on their body, such as pain and fatigue, many drew on the positive embodied experiences of their job role that allowed them to maintain a positive work identity. This also highlights how spaces, such as the workplace, are seen to be a key factor in the assemblage/s that affect embodiment, as bodies and their environment are “intra-actively co-constituted” as they form part of the *“real world”* (Barad, 2007, p. 170).

The oppressive practices embedded within organisational policies and practices created ongoing uncertainty as to how some participants could manage their disability in mainstream work spaces. Joyce, the general manager from Able-Industries, had a sense of trepidation when considering a possible career change in the future. This was because of the uncertainty and the physical demands of a mainstream job which would performatively enact her disability as form of oppression:

“I know if I get tired, ‘cos I only work 4 days...3 days to rest and recover...I know if I get seriously tired then I’m seriously ill...and so I can’t take that risk of being back in the corporate place where you’re under so much pressure... like some mornings...I literally can’t get out of bed...I know if I was in corporate world you can’t be doing that” (Joyce, Sheltered, Manager)

Others, such as Colin (Mainstream), felt dread, which manifested physically at the thought of returning to work because of their previous experiences: *“it makes me well up ...I feel quite emotional, my hairs on my arms are going up”* (Colin, Mainstream). Colin, Joyce and others were wary of the unpredictable daily demands that would be requested of them and how this could result in negative embodied experiences, or ultimately exclusion from the workplace: *“I think part of that is because you don’t know what you are going to encounter”* (Colin, Mainstream). Both Colin and Joyce fear the embedded organisational norms and practices that would constrain their embodied experiences. These practices performatively enact exclusionary discourses of bodily production, of who is seen to be a valuable employee asset, by continuously reifying dominant gendered, sexed, classed, able-bodied norms (Barad, 2007). Joyce, for example, indicates the difference in the performance expectations in supported employment (relaxed and adaptable) compared with corporate mainstream organisations (strict and fixed). The fragility and unpredictability of an individual’s body also appear to be in conflict with the able-bodied and gendered material-discursive practices

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that permeate mainstream organisations spaces; this affected many of the respondent's decisions not to apply for mainstream jobs. The above analysis demonstrates the relational human and economic cost of exclusionary organisational practices which do not account for the complexity, embodiment and dynamic range of human differences (Braidotti, 2013a).

Much like those who were employed at the sheltered workshop, Sophie (Mainstream) felt that the decision to work alongside others who also had MS was much preferable to pretending to be 'normal' or rather able-bodied. She stated because "*you're all in the same boat... they've got loads of things to talk about, to offer, but they're just not very good with their bodies which is exactly how I am*" (Sophie, Mainstream). The sense of belongingness ("*you're all in the same boat*") and being open about their disability without fear of being judged and excluded by others, was important for most participants well-being. The practices enacted within the sheltered organisation, therefore, seemed to be able to offer workers the opportunity to maintain a positive sense of self without the need to keep up appearances, managing expectations and working long hours. Many of the participants across both studies recognised the importance of the workspace in creating and maintaining a sense of productivity - a positive form of embodiment. Diana (Sheltered, Training officer), for instance, stated in her interview that:

"we try to support them ...by making them feel that they are productive...I tend to look at it a little bit different, I'm not looking so much for work skills I'm looking, sometimes holistically at what else can we add...what can we do to make these guys you know better...less isolated...more confident."

The participant observations at Able-Industries thus revealed that the sheltered organisation established a *bilateral relationship* with its employees as the management team were not only identifying how employees would contribute towards the organisation but also what the organisation could do to develop their employees' well-being.

5.4.4. *The intersection of disability and gender*

This section explores how, over time, the production of disability and gender is materially and discursively performatively enacted within and between multiple sociomaterial spaces. Research has repeatedly found that organisational spaces are gendered in multiple ways. First, gendered characteristics have been found to be attached to job roles or industries (e.g. construction is masculine and beauty therapy is feminine) (see Acker, 2006, 2012). Second, gendered norms are entangled with behavioural norms that are performatively enacted within organisational spaces, both materially and discursively (e.g. all women are caring) (e.g. Tyler

Both gendered job roles and gendered norms enacted within organisational spaces were evident in the data. Colin (Mainstream) and Jennifer (Mainstream) worked in male-dominated careers (construction and electrical engineering) in which the workers bodily and behavioural norms, physical spaces, and the job roles were seen to embody traditional hegemonic masculinity. Both Colin and Jennifer discussed how gender, particularly hegemonic masculinity, was performatively enacted within their workplace which constrained their intra-actions with other people and the spaces at work. For instance, Colin (Mainstream) was treated with shock and contempt, stating “*you see people recoil*”, when he enacted atypical masculine behaviour, such as discussing his declining mental health on attempting to return to work after his back injury. Like others, Colin found that discussing his private life, such as his struggles with his altered embodied experiences, were not welcome within the hegemonic masculine organisational spaces. This was evident by managers or co-workers who attempted to re-establish typical masculine gendered behaviour with comments such as “*oh! don't talk about topping yourself*”. Colin's experience of exclusion was enacted when he performatively enacted atypical gendered and ability practices, which were rejected for breaking the social norms inherent to that particular sociomaterial environment.

Jennifer discussed having to work through “*female-male kind of barriers*” during her daily intra-actions with the sociomaterial environment, as her sex and her gender status was at odds with the male and masculine bodily, and the behavioural norms entrenched within the workspace. Her everyday embodied work experiences were further constrained by the job requirement to physically “*climb up amongst the machines*”. She discussed that although she was “*technically minded...physically there was no way*” she could sustain the role due to the swelling and pain of the arthritic joints in her body, stating “*I wouldn't be able to do it*”. The role, unfortunately, could not be adapted to accommodate her abilities, due to its formation around historical and cultural able-bodied norms, so she made the decision, like others had, to change careers to more office-based work which provided greater security and support. This is a further example of identity work as she sought to find a job role that she could physically maintain to create a positive work identity.

The participant observations at Able-Industries also revealed that the manufacturing job role and the workspace were entrenched with masculine norms. The masculine traits attached to the job role was seen to affect the number of women applying to come and work at Able-Industries which was confirmed during the interview with Joyce the manager:

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“we don't have any set criteria, and funny enough women are actually much better at the jobs that we have than men... but it, it's what appeals to people... it is sort of two fold, one the people seeing that “oh it's manufacturing” and also when they do come seeing that there's not a lot of women that sometimes put them off, so we have managed to get more women in...and we continue to try and do that because I would like a sort of more equal...workforce, but it is the nature of the job, once it's at the Jobcentre etcetera and it's explained what we do, it appeals more to men than it does women.” (Joyce, Manager, Sheltered)

The quote above suggests that the material-discursive practices within and between the workshop and other sociomaterial spaces (e.g. job centre) are entangled with masculine bodily and behavioural norms which performatively enact gender. Furthermore, as a consequence these norms implicitly or explicitly exclude women from entering these space. The effects of the historical and cultural gendered norms that surround manufacturing spaces was visually evident in the number of women present at Able-Industries which was around half the number of men on a given day. The gendered exclusionary practices are also reinforced by both men and women who choose or choose not to work in the workshop. Although manufacturing is entangled with masculine discourses, during Joyce's interview she critiqued the homogeneous performative assumption that men are better suited to manufacturing spaces in her evaluation of the workforce. She in fact favoured women's job performance over the men:

“funny enough women are actually much better at the jobs that we have than men...it's a known fact women are much better at production than men”
(Joyce, Sheltered, Manager)

Although this implies that there are gender differences, Joyce evaluation was relational as she focused on what bodies did in their environment (their capacities) rather than just what bodies are (male or female) (Fox and Alldred, 2017; Barad, 2003).

Like other respondents, Sarah (Mainstream) experienced exclusion and discrimination based on her gender and disability on attempting to enter a visual-based and female-dominated industry (beauty therapy). On applying for a nail technician job at a spa/beauty salon Sarah claimed that her potential employer discriminated against her on the basis of what her body was (based on her appearance), rather than her body could do. She claimed they did not ask any “*relevant questions*” about her qualifications or work experience (Lindsay et al., 2019). The exclusionary practices had a huge effect on Sarah's sense of self: “*it hit me hard that, I think that was the first time that I thought, I'm*

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different...and it's gonna stop me, and it [did]... 'cos I didn't per-sue it after that my beauty therapy" (Sarah, Mainstream). Sarah was discriminated and ultimately excluded on the basis of her looks (e.g. frosted glasses and a limp) which were seen to be atypical for an industry that seeks to personify feminine ideals (i.e. beauty and grace), of which Sarah was judged not to embody. Similarly, Sasha (Mainstream) experienced exclusion on the basis of her profile notably her black skin and her visible disability, with many attributing her the quality of 'underachiever', with limited physical and mental abilities. These examples demonstrate how abilities are overlooked (i.e. what bodies can do) in work environments that performatively enact and judge bodies against heteronormative masculine or feminine performative ideals (i.e. what bodies are) (Knights, 2019; Pecis and Priola, 2019). These ideals can result in negative experiences because of the rigidity of social norms which exclude certain employees who fail to follow them, such as talking about their mental health or their physical ability in the workplace.

During observations at Able-Industries, it became apparent that masculine and feminine gender roles were reinforced, and resisted, in the workshop on a daily basis. When asking what employment opportunities workers wanted most of the women desired more administration job opportunities and stated their enjoyment when working in the kitchen, thus reinforcing women's historic and gendered roles. On the other hand, most of the men disliked working in the kitchen (although some men did), with many admitting that they did not learn the skills to cook as often their mother did, or still continued to do, all the cooking and cleaning in their household. Most of the men, drawing on the historical and cultural masculine norms of employment, preferred more practical based jobs with the opportunity to learn new practical skills (e.g. forklift truck licence, electrical engineering). When interviewees were asked if they should perform a role associated with the opposite gender many reinforced gendered stereotypes such as: *"electrical work would be more for a man which I don't think I would really want to do anyway."* (Hayley, Sheltered) or *"I think it's [using a forklift truck] probably more a bloke [job]...I think it's usually more blokes not women that do it."* (Adam, Sheltered).

Some of the men at Able-Industries also engaged with patriarchal discourses where women were seen to be inferior compared with men. For example, I witnessed a male team leader reinforce gendered norms by asking men to help with the heavy lifting and asked women to clean up despite there being more men than women present on a given day. Further to this, during the interviews when asking about some of the daily intra-actions I had witnessed between women and men, some of the women discussed that they disliked the

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lack of moral support from Muhammad, a team leader. They stated he needed a “*kinder attitude*” (Mary, Sheltered) as it made some of the women “*upset*” because of “*the way he used to speak at times*” (Hayley, Sheltered). In contrast, both Mary and Hayley had better intra-actions with the other two team leaders who were women. During the observations I found Mohammad to be flippant, dismissive and what was meant to be playful banter was, in my opinion, judgemental on their appearance (their clothes, attractiveness, or their weight). For example, on one occasion a get well card was being sent round for staff to sign as one of the tutors was off, on asking Muhammad what was wrong with her he replied “*having an op I think, I don't know, I don't really care*” (Field note) which shocked me because of his uncaring attitude towards a colleague. On the other hand, some of the older women felt more empowered because of their independence, especially if they lived on their own:

“I've also been married and divorced, and I don't think I would want to go out with anybody else now...I like being by myself and I like my little flat by myself...and I love living by myself...and I love my own company.” (Mary, Sheltered)

The observations and the interview data revealed that disability and gender were performatively enacted and resisted through the intra-actions between the body and other bodies, material objects, and spaces. Furthermore the material-discursive practices enacted during these intra-actions also reproduced gendered and able-bodied norms within and between these spaces. Whilst disability and gender have been historically associated as forms of vulnerability (e.g. weakness), with disabled women often seen to rely/depend on interdependent relationships with other people, institutions and/or technology, there were examples of the women in both studies breaking away from these pejorative discourses. These include women noting their reliance on their “*own company*” and they rejected the patriarchal and ableist attitudes of male colleagues as being ‘inappropriate’ in the working space.

To summarise, difference is performatively enacted through multiple and often conflicting material-discursive practices that surround bodies, organisations and society more generally. Social norms which are embedded in all aspects of social life, continue to be reproduced throughout time which reify the dominant able-bodied and masculine material-discursive practices which, if not contested and challenged, continue to exclude bodies on what they are rather than what they do. There was however evidence of resistance

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where the respondents challenged the binary and essentialist framing of disability and gender. This is discussed next.

5.5. Resisting and disrupting oppressive practices

Normative material-discursive practices that privilege able-bodied bodies and view disability as a deficiency were challenged by many of the respondents. As evidenced above, the performative enactment of disability and gender is relational and affected by multiple and mutually affecting intra-actions between bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces. The practice enacted were also subject to multiple historical, cultural, geopolitical, and biopolitical power relations. The data analysis revealed that dominant disability and gender practices were also performatively rejected in the same relational manner, specifically through the intra-actions between and within bodies, material objects, and sociomaterial spaces.

5.5.1. Disrupting oppressive disability assumptions

Identities such as disability and gender are often seen to be homogeneous, however, as previously discussed there are issues when material-discursive practices reify normative and prejudiced discourses (Knights, 2015). Many of the participants performatively reinforced or rejected social norms in the workspace. For example, Indra (Shelterd) stated:

“in my previous employment it was very difficult because of people's ignorance, yeah I'm only deaf, I am not stupid... but lots of people still now... they've got no deaf awareness, they don't understand... To me being deaf is normal...but other people think ... “there's something wrong with her the poor thing because she's deaf”...some deaf people do have learning difficulties but I don't have any.” (Indra, Sheltered)

Here Indra refutes (a form of identity work) that d/Deafness is equated to cognitive deficiency (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017). Importantly Indra distances herself from disability stereotypes, whereas in a separate interview another worker drew on the inaccurate stereotype of what it meant to be d/Deaf: “*there are quite a few friends here at the workshop who are deaf and dumb*” (Mary, Sheltered). Other workers such as Henry also held a stereotypical view of disability. In his mind a disability was a visual and physical disability: “*they're not really disabled are they really here... you don't see anyone that comes in with walking sticks or a wheelchair or anything like that*”. When I challenged this viewpoint and stated that there are different types of disabilities with different requirements he did admit

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"I never looked at it that way". This demonstrated that even in an environment where everyone was meant to be treated equally some of the workers enacted oppressive practices.

As already indicated throughout this chapter, most of the respondents implicitly or explicitly challenged the oppressive practices that surround the historical and cultural concept of disability through engaging in activities of identity work to reframe how they defined their impairment. For example:

"I still don't really think of myself as being disabled and I probably haven't for a lot of the time." (Jennifer, Mainstream)

"I am not disabled...I'm less abled than other people...or I have different abilities.... always come with the positives." (Sharon, Mainstream)

Although they do not view themselves as pejoratively disabled they clearly distinguish their own position (I, myself) from others assumptions of their body. Sharon demonstrated the disruption from the stereotypical material-discursive practices of a disability that she underwent in her own processes of identity work. She went from thinking *"I can't do this"* which focused on her disadvantage, to a more positive and opportunistic stance of *"I have different abilities"* which draws on her abilities rather than her impairment effects as a hindrance (Jammaers et al., 2016).

5.5.2. Maintaining employability

Many respondents disrupted the assumption that having an impairment prevented them from being able to work. They instead argued that it was the way in which jobs were designed, the exclusionary organisational practices, inaccessible workspaces, and/or the type of support available that prevented their participation in the workplace. For example Donna (Mainstream) stressed that her partially paralysed arm *"never stopped me from working"*. Donna did concede, however, that *"I just think that I'm abled for certain jobs"* that did not require the prolonged or prominent use of her limited mobility in her arm within the workplace (i.e. certain intra-actions with material objects/bodies were not possible). Donna's career ambition growing up was to become a hairdresser, however, due to the effect of the paralysis in her arm (post-polio) this was not physically manageable as she could not physically lift the materials (e.g. a hairdryer) to use them on another person's hair. Nonetheless, Donna found jobs where she could work, such as sewing and retail work that would not hold her back because of her impairment.

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Most of the participants discussed how the way they approached work was different from those who were able-bodied as they have had to adapt their abilities to their work environment and the material objects within the space. They felt they had to prove their “*work ethic and [show] you're not just a sloucher*” (Sophie, Mainstream) compared to others in the workplace. Penny (Mainstream), however, stressed the importance of bespoke emotional or moral and material support within organisations to sustain the employability of disabled people. Penny claimed workers with an impairment “*aren't the same as other people...because they have to deal with that problem...where other people don't*”. Penny thus recognises the shortcomings in organisational policies and practices enacted within the organisational spaces (e.g. performance management, hiring or promotional panels) which often exclude those who cannot consistently adhere to the one-size-fits-all policies/practices without significant personal cost.

To improve their chances of gaining and maintaining a job, some of the mainstream employees completed qualifications to ensure that they had a high skill set which made them a more valuable asset which they believed would provide more protection:

“if I'm going into an unskilled job it's easy for someone else to take my job...so I was trying to find something where if I was skilled enough I'd be a bit more protected.” (Jane, Mainstream)

Many believed and had experienced, that working in low-skilled employment would always be precarious and never stable. Others feared being fired for impairment-related disruptions, such as requesting accommodations or attending hospital appointments. For some (e.g. Colin, Jane, and Sasha) obtaining further qualifications was a positive cognitive distraction from their physical impairment as they were able to fully utilise their intelligence without being physically restricted or excluded from sociomaterial spaces, especially when working from home. Additionally, those who achieved a senior position used this privilege to support disabled people and challenged other's stereotypical material-discursive practices:

“One of the reasons I got into management in the first place was to make sure these things [discrimination] don't happen... I mean if you can't do anything about it then you need to be in charge of it don't you?...so I would personally take on somebody with a disability, of course I would, if they could do the job why wouldn't I...but most people don't think like that.” (Sophie, Mainstream)

One of the main differences between mainstream and sheltered employment related to the idea of security, which was linked with the type and level of seniority held in employment.

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For many who had worked in a low-skilled profession, they felt that the pressure to perform to and maintain entrenched societal norms was unattainable. So far, disruption and resistance have been considered from an individual perspective, however there were examples of organisational resistance which are discussed next.

5.5.3. Organisational resistance and disruption of disability

Overall Able-Industries sought to challenge the exclusionary material-discursive practices of disability in a number of different ways. As evidenced above, in the current western neoliberal capitalist society individuals are expected to keep their working and personal lives separate. This is reflected in organisational practices which depersonalise and dehumanise the workspace: workers who fail to separate their personal lives often face consequences notably exclusion (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015). Able-Industries, however, purposely blurred this line of separation. There were numerous crossovers in working and personal lives seen during participant observations. For example, when Sally's welfare benefits were stopped through missing the deadline to get her benefit renewal form in, her behaviour (attitude and performance) at work was seen to change during my observations. On asking what was wrong after hearing her talk to herself I encouraged her to speak to one of the management team about her financial worries as they may provide some help, but she did not want to. Other staff soon picked up on her change in behaviour, but rather than discipline her for her disruption to productivity, the management team were very sympathetic and concerned for her well-being and offered support to resolve the problem.

Diana, the training officer, explained during a particular observation that they had more social care issues impacting the workers at Able-Industries and they, where possible, actively tried to deal with these issues. For instance, Jason, during his interview, stated that the management team supported him in a number of ways such as arranging for him to go *“to the dentist to get my teeth pulled...and then going to get my measurements... because I'm really not that good at organising those sorts of things”*. Further to this, the managers at Able-Industries also recognised the relational factors that affected the embodiment of their employees in the workplace. For example, Able-Industries was developing a skill training workshop, a sociomaterial space fitted with white goods typically found in the home (e.g. washing machine, cooker), to help employees develop life skills (e.g. cooking and cleaning) that they could use in their daily lives. Senior staff explained to me that many workers relied on their elderly parents for socioeconomic/material support and they needed to be independent before they lose their primary carers. The management team had witnessed how

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losing both a parent and a carer in the home space had a huge impact on their employees' sense of self and this negatively affected their work performance.

To disrupt entrenched material-discursive practices, the management team argue that communication and visual demonstrations with other members of society (e.g. other employers) are key to challenging bias and prejudice on disability. Joyce (Sheltered, Manager) stressed that there is a need for a thorough understanding of the range of disabilities in employment in order to overcome the limitations of stereotypical knowledge:

“I think it should be compulsory for everybody in personnel to understand... disabilities...there's not much in there about understanding the different disabilities and often it's very focused on the physical if it is in there” (Joyce, Manager, Sheltered)

Joyce here recognises the skew in knowledge to physical disabilities that is often drawn upon in the majority of cases which has, in her opinion, affected the experiences of the workers at Able-Industries. The management team also worked to overcome their workers' own feelings of 'inadequacy' developed from either comparing their abilities to others or worrying about their performance in relation to others. During observations there were multiple intra-actions between staff and shop floor workers; for example, when Sally was really worried about her performance she shouted over to the team leader “*I hope you don't think I am being slow*” (Field note). Sally was concerned that Mohammad (team leader) was dissatisfied with her productivity, but he reassured her that he was not. However, it was seen that when production deadlines were tight the margin for error was reduced and shop floor workers experienced increasing levels of pressure. Equally, team leaders expected more consistent productivity from the workers and were less tolerant of mistakes.

To overcome and challenge the barriers discussed above in this chapter, Able-Industries used the workshop as a successful case study to change employers' perceptions and generate awareness, of what it means to have a disability in the workplace. They did this by inviting representatives from local organisations (such as Morrison, Wilko's) and from the local council to visit the workshop:

“when everybody comes here it changes their mind... they see it as so vibrant and everybody rushing around doing stuff and everybody working and they're like “oh my goodness it's incredible, we can't believe it would be like this”. So I think it's a lot of education really.” (Joyce, Sheltered, Manager)

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The management team, therefore, aimed to show how disabled people who are stereotypically excluded from mainstream employment on the basis of what their bodies are (i.e. disabled) is wrong and oppressive. They showcased the numerous intra-actions between people, the organisation, and the physical space “*to demonstrate just how normal...they are*” (Diana, Training Officer, Sheltered). By showing the capabilities of disabled workers they sought to shift the material-discursive practices currently enacted by mainstream employers from exclusive to inclusive by disrupting the stereotypical discourses on the abilities of disabled people. Ultimately Able-Industries hoped invited employers would re-evaluate and modify their policies and practices to include more disabled employees in their workplace without fear or uncertainty. The management team also continue to support prior employees who had since transitioned into mainstream employment. Diana and Joyce explained that for a successful transition it was vital that an ongoing relationship was established with the new employer/organisation:

“we don't just leave them down where ever we've put them...we go down and talk to people, we explain what the issues will be...where the problem will be, and we always say to the people who are employing them, if there is a problem ring us ...and we can talk to you about the best ways to deal with that problem...a lot of time when people are going into places the organisation themselves think things too confused...you try and make it complicated when often it's actually just a little fix that does it” (Joyce, Sheltered)

By building a synergistic relationship with external employers the management team can continue to disrupt exclusionary working practices within mainstream organisations. This prevents their previous employees from being subject to practices that performatively enact their disability as a form of oppression which may result in them being fired or subject to discriminatory practices.

A further dimension to challenging material-discursive practices, specific to Able-Industries, related to sourcing funding to support the organisation and its workers. Although predominantly successful, Joyce stated that there were a number of perceptions that needed to be repeatedly challenged:

“everybody wants to fund disabled children but as soon as they become adults nobody seems to want to do anything... most of the funding we want [is] to pay wages to the guys...because that's where all our money goes...[and] you get comments like well “why don't you charge the right rate?”, or “well surely you're uneconomical?”” (Joyce, Sheltered, Manager)

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Able-Industries is therefore under pressure to economically sustain itself and under pressure to also implement performance management procedures seen in most corporate organisations. As reported by the manager they receive comment such as: “*well if they can't make the grade you should get new people in*” (Joyce, Sheltered, Manager). Many of the external stakeholders expected Able-Industries to implement practices that enact able-bodied and masculine norms, and workers who cannot perform to a set standard should be excluded. Despite the financial difficulties, Joyce, however, disrupted these oppressive practices stating that “*they're never gonna make the target so we don't expect them to, we expect them to work as hard as they can*”. This disrupts the quantitative material-discursive practices usually placed on all employees to an individual qualitative focus, recognising the individual differences of their employees which creates a more inclusive workplace (Braidotti, 2013b).

To summarise, there were a number of ways in which the respondents reported resisting and disrupting oppressive material-discursive practices. This was done on an individual basis by challenging assumptions that a disability is an abnormality, with many arguing that they are ‘normal’. They also disrupted the assumption that having a disability means that you cannot work; some just needed to work in a particular type of job or needed some support. Finally, the theme explored how disruption occurred on an organisational level, such as promoting awareness and disrupting perceptions through visual demonstrations of the capabilities of a disabled workforce.

5.6. Summary of findings

This chapter has presented the findings of a thematic analysis which was further interrogated with a feminist posthumanist performative lens. Overall, the findings demonstrate the impact of historic and cultural material-discursive practices that reproduce the binary distinctions that privilege the able-bodied over the disabled, men over women, white ethnicity over black ethnicity, and middle-class over working-class. These ongoing oppressive practices have also been shaped by neoliberal capitalist norms which feeds reproduce these hierarchical discourses. Despite this, there was direct evidence to suggest that dualistic material-discursive practices can be rejected in favour of a more individual and ability focused approach that breaks away from the historical and cultural formation of privilege. This was done on an interpersonal level and on an organisational level. There was evidence that the respondents engaged in identity work, an activity to “create, adapt, signify, claim and reject identities from available resources”, to overcome their negative sense of self in the workplace (Brown, 2017, p. 298). This included deciding to change careers, choosing an

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office-based job rather than a physical one, choosing an alternative type of employment, or leaving employment entirely through early retirement. Identity work also included directly challenging their own or other's behaviours or assumption on the abilities of disabled women and men.

By drawing on the experiences of workers in mainstream and in sheltered organisations the analysis has shown how the intra-actions reported shared some commonalities and how they differed in some respects. Overall, it is evidence that those who work in sheltered employment, despite it being low-skilled and low-paid work, were more likely to report positive intra-actions within the workplace than those in mainstream employment. Nonetheless, many of the respondents reported the destructive force of the practices enacted by others or material spaces, which expected them to conform to able-bodied and masculine performative norms, even in an environment which was supposed to embrace all abilities. Specifically, the assemblage of material-discursive practices (political, historical, cultural) that coalesced around particular spaces, material objects, and/or the material body were often exclusionary and resistant to change. Overall the findings demonstrate how and in what way material-discursive practices performatively enacted gender and disability in the workplace noting the ethical consequences of the oppressive and exclusionary practices.

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusion

Within the thesis I have reported the findings of a research study to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the material-discursive practices that pervade organisational sociomaterial spaces affect disabled women and men working in supported and mainstream workplaces?
2. How and in what way does the performative enactment of gender affect the experiences of disability in the workplace?
3. How are oppressive material-discursive practices enacted within organisations resisted or disrupted by disabled women and men?

To answer the above research questions a thematic analysis was undertaken on data which emerged from participant observations in a sheltered workshop, and from interviews with disabled individuals working in the sheltered workshop and in mainstream employment. The themes were then diffractively analysed with a feminist posthumanist performative lens. The analysis of the data in Chapter 5 was presented in the five themes: 1) inclusion, exclusion and discrimination, 2) cognitive and physical barriers, 3) practical and work-based support, 4) performative enactment of difference, and 5) resisting and disrupting oppressive practices.

Overall analysing the data with a feminist posthumanist performative perspective demonstrates how identities such as disability and gender are or are not performatively enacted as forms of oppression. This was done by critically exploring the complex and dynamic intra-actions between bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces (Barad, 2007, 2003). Additionally, the analysis has shown how material-discursive practices, taken to mean the relational affect or the ontological inseparability of “discursive practices and material phenomena”, have an agentic affect on how matter emerges through boundaries and meaning making (Barad, 2003, p. 810). Important to note, as discussed in Chapter 3, agency is not used in its usual humanist way as it does not refer to an attribute that someone or something has, but rather it is a “doing/being” (Barad, 2003, p. 827). For example, the analysis showed how the performative enactment of disability and gender as forms of oppression are brought into being through an assemblage of mutually affective factors that “enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (see Figure 6.1 below) (Barad, 2005, p. 148). Importantly, what is not conveyed in Figure 6.1 are the historical and cultural factors which have led to the development of these material-discursive practices.

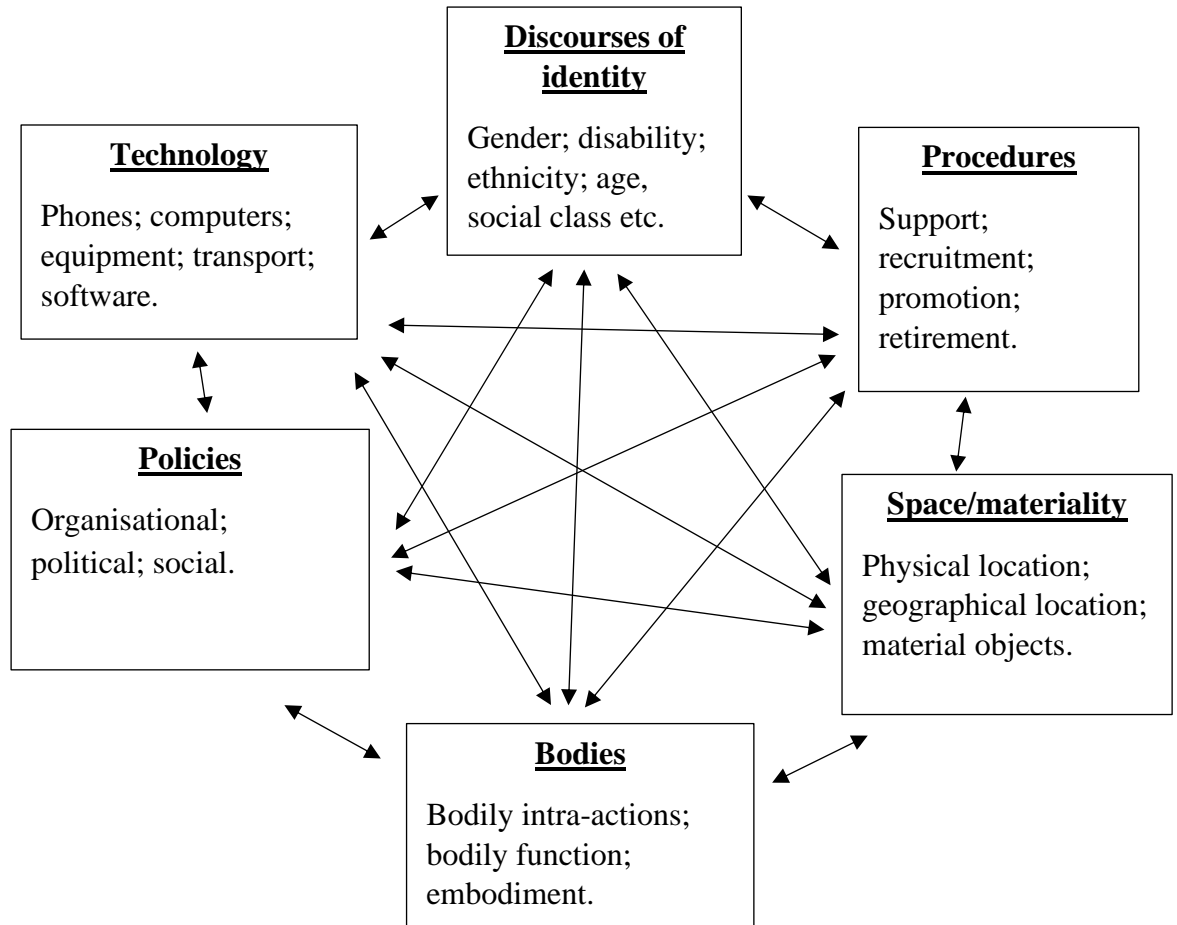


Figure 6.1: Rhizomatic map of material-discursive practices that inform findings

The findings offer several contributions to feminist posthumanist performativity studies: 1) the analysis critically explores how material-discursive practices enacted within contemporary systems of work constrain access to, and progression within, employment for disabled women and men; 2) the study adds evidence to the limited studies that explore how identities such as disability and gender are performatively enacted as forms of oppression. The relational affective analysis explores the inseparability of discursive practices and material phenomena in practices of bodily production, and thus advances knowledge on the intersection of oppressive practices; 3) the study adds evidence of how the performative enactment of minority identities as forms of oppression are disrupted and challenged through strategies that emerge within a feminist posthumanist performative lens, specifically transformative affirmative ethics. The findings and their contribution will be discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter.

The structure of this chapter is as follows, the first three sections will explore the main contributions related to each of the research questions and how the findings of the project support or contradict the literature discussed above.

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- The first section will explore work practices and will discuss the contribution the thesis has made by critiquing contemporary systems of work evident in the data analysis.
- The second section discusses the contribution to disability and gender performative identity literature. Specifically, this section explores how within a relational analysis disability and gender are performatively brought into being within sociomaterial spaces that enact able-bodied and gendered social norms.
- The third section explores how oppressive material-discursive practices are overcome through activities of identity work and the enactment of transformative affirmative ethics (Braidotti, 2016, 2019). This section evaluates how the findings relate to the wider neoliberal capitalist ideals and how much agency and power individuals have within their intra-actions to instigate change to disrupt these material-discursive practices.

The chapter then moves on to discuss the implications of the project on theory, policy and practice before discussing the strengths and limitations of the project. The sixth section will consider future directions for research that can address the gaps identified in the project before presenting a final conclusion.

6.1. Contribution to performativity: critiquing the contemporary systems of work

By diffractively drawing on the insights from multiple streams of critical-based work, such as feminist disability studies (e.g. Garland-Thomson, 2011) and feminist new materialist studies specifically posthumanism and/or performativity (e.g. Barad, 2003, 2007; Braidotti 2013a, 2016, 2019; Pitts-Taylor, 2017), I have sought to “shift the focus from questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality...to matters of practices/doings/actions” (Barad, 2003, p. 803). This section discusses how the data analysis answers the following research question: How do the material-discursive practices that pervade organisational sociomaterial spaces affect disabled women and men working in supported and mainstream workplaces? The data explored how material-discursive practices enacted within and between employment institutions, material bodies, and material objects produced particular bodies that are included or excluded within sociomaterial spaces. The data was further analysed to explore if or how these material-discursive practices performatively enacted disability and/or gender as a form of oppression (Thomas, 1999). Within the thesis I have incorporated feminist posthumanist performativity to decentre, but not disregard, the human in order to actively consider the agency of other non-human and inanimate objects to affect bodily production (Barnwell, 2017).

The current study contributes to performative based studies (e.g. Tyler and Cohen, 2010, p. 192) which claim that “we do not simply occupy space, but rather we become ourselves in and through it”. Similar to Tyler and Cohen (2010) I found that some of the respondents materially and discursively enact able-bodied, masculine and dominant organisational material-discursive practices to performatively pass for ‘normal’. Consequently, they remain “caught in dialectical relationships of submission” which reinforce the dominant binary norms within society (Braidotti, 2013b, p. 344). Others, however, performatively rejected the able-bodied and gendered social norms embedded within the sociomaterial workspace to maintain an authentic sense of self. They, therefore, “reject the sanctimonious, dogmatic tone of dominant ideologies...in favour of a production of joyful acts of transformation” (Braidotti, 2013b, pp. 356-357). A person’s disability or gender is thus materialised through their ongoing intra-actions with other bodies, material objects (e.g. technology and office equipment), and the inclusive or oppressive material-discursive practices enacted within and between sociomaterial spaces (Moss and Dyck, 2002; Braidotti, 2013b). Those in mainstream employment were often subject to boundary making employment practices that “contribute to the denigration, discrimination and dismissal of particular forms of embodiment, including those of non-human others” (Dale and Latham, 2015, p. 167). The analysis has shown how organisational material-discursive practices such as performance expectations explicitly affect the embodiment of the research participants and their ability to participate in the workplace. Importantly, non-work material-discursive practices, such as government policies and social norms, enacted during intra-actions over time and within multiple sociomaterial spaces (e.g. hospitals, schools) created specific agential cuts, a moment in time caused by the assemblage of specific intra-actions, that did or did not performatively enact a disability and gender (Barad, 2007). The exclusionary practices consequently affected how individuals did or did not disclose their disability in the workplace. For example, Sophie herself performatively enacted disability as a form of oppression which affected how she saw herself and she then carefully controlled how others would assess her body during intra-actions in the workplace.

There were often material-discursive practices that were enacted during a body’s intra-action with the physical environment that sociomaterially excluded them from full participation within the multiple uses of the space. Examples of exclusionary workspaces include the distance to the break room or accessible toilets, lack of wheelchair/stair-free access into buildings, and behavioural social norms assigned to spaces such as always

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requiring workers to be onsite. Others found that their intersecting disability and gender identity created a conflict in how others performatively enacted either their disability or gender by holding them accountable to dominant social norms. For example, Colin was told to shrug his injury off and get back to work which reinforces hegemonic masculinity within the workspace. This caused Colin additional distress as it undermines his embodied experience. The above examples of material phenomena and discursive practices reproduced disability and/or gender as a form of oppression. For instance, Sophie would eat at her desk to avoid walking to the break room which reduced her social relations with other staff, and Sarah would wait to feel uncomfortable before going to use the disabled toilets that were far away from her desk (this became a major feat when she was pregnant). These examples demonstrate the agentic affect of space, matter and time as organisational spaces are often designed for and by able-bodied individuals which excludes and reproduces bodies as being disabled if they cannot use or traverse the space as intended (Oliver, 1990; Braidotti, 2006, 2016). The data revealed how bodily boundaries, specifically how and when bodies were perfectly brought into being were subject to constant flux as “[b]oundaries do not sit still” (Barad, 2007, p. 171). For example, the observations or interview data revealed that some ‘spacetimeamatter’ relations did not reproduce and exclude bodies as being disabled and/or gendered. However, on other occasions small changes to intra-actions such as the temperature of the workplace, new job materials, or working with different people created new agential cuts that did produce bodies as disabled or gendered. This provides empirical evidence that “*matter is a dynamic intra-active becoming that is implicated and enfolded in its iterative becoming. Matter(ing) is a dynamic articulation/configuration of the world.*” (Barad, 2007, p. 151, original emphasis).

Organisational material-discursive practices are embedded within the wider practices of society and regional/global ideology. As discussed in the previous chapter and throughout this thesis, it is evident that many workers in the UK have to abide by one-size-fits-all organisational policies and practices. Additionally, entrenched capitalist power relations continue to reproduce dominant social norms which hold bodies accountable to quantitative measurement of productivity (Arruzza et al., 2019). Neoliberal capitalist systems of work, as theorised within a feminist posthumanist performative lens, are not seen to be a set social system but rather “repeated, routinized and habituated pattern of interactions” that reproduce social inequalities (Fox and Alldred, 2017, p. 62). These repeated intra-actions of power relations lead to those who performatively enact these capitalist practices to feel that they have limited power to resist or change these ‘spacetimematter’ relations that negatively affect their lives. Therefore, as reported in prior studies, whilst the analysis revealed that

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some systems in place sustain essentialist material-discursive practices, it also revealed that the reproduction of current political and ideological systems and the relational power they enact prevent those who are negatively affected to challenge these systems (Arruzza et al., 2019; Contu, 2020).

Like previous studies, the data revealed that interviewees reported pressure to perform to an unsustainable level, on par with their non-disabled colleagues, which often led to further ill health, such as stress, fatigue, and pain (Baumberg, 2015; Roulestone and Williams, 2014; Ferve et al, 2013). Within the thesis I found that those in mainstream employment were held accountable to more dominant able-bodied and capitalist-driven productivity norms, which they were expected to uphold, more so than those in sheltered employment, thus supporting the work of Foster (2018). Many of the workers at Able-Industries experienced more inclusive practices that enabled them (for the most part) to work to the best of *their ability* rather than *imposing performative expectations upon them*. Whilst there was evidence of both inclusive and exclusive material-discursive practices enacted within both types of employment, there was examples of practices of affirmative ethics in which disabled women and men's identities are valued for their difference rather than oppressed (Braidotti, 2006, 2016). By adopting a critical posthumanism lens, Braidotti (2019, p. 53) claims rethinking who or what counts as human "provides a diversified array of changing perceptions and formations of the 'human'" which is currently "internally fractured". This provides scholars "a frame for the actualisation of the many missing people, whose 'minor' or nomadic knowledge is the breeding ground for possible futures" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 53). Thus, the relational affects of material-discursive practices have the capacity to transform knowledge production from binary thinking, which reinforces minority identities as forms of oppression, to embracing the positivity of difference. This transformation transcends oppressive practices and instead focuses on "empowerment and affirmation" of our intra-connection with other bodies and spaces during agentic intra-actions (Braidotti, 2016, p. 26; Baldrige and Kulkarni 2017; Jammaers et al., 2016).

Within the thesis I found that the imposed systems of work performatively exclude bodies through agencies of observation that leave marks of bodies (Barad, 2003). For example, disclosing a disability on an application form or having visual markers of an impairment and/or their sex resulted in these bodies being excluded from workspaces. These organisational material-discursive practices enacted are affected by the historical and cultural able-bodied, masculine, or classed norms embedded within a specific industry or job role. Organisational practices subsequently exclude bodies for their inability to

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upholding these dominant social norms. However, whilst Able-Industries appeared to be more acceptive of different abilities, the management team at times drew upon capitalist productivity norms. For example, they micromanaged the performance of their workers and reprimanded those who were disruptive or had lower productivity than expected. Pressures to perform were evident when there were looming deadlines that the workshop was in danger of overrunning which would affect the credibility of the business. Although the findings demonstrate that sheltered employment provides more support for disabled individuals and appears to challenge socially entrenched oppressive practices of disability, the organisation as a whole still adhered to a business model and to institutional norms of capitalism where individuals would be given contractual hours (full-time and part-time) (Gill, 2005). There were instances, however, where they deviated from this procedure. For example, facilitating gradual exposure to the work environment, in short but increasing increments, until new workers felt comfortable. Contrastingly, those in mainstream employment were under enormous pressure to uphold able-bodied norms, with the expectation in some fields, such as academia, to go beyond this in order to qualify for a promotion. This thesis widened the scope of inquiry considered in previous studies (e.g. Brewster et al., 2017) to different types and levels of employment. Similarly to Brewster et al, it was found that able-bodied norms sociomaterially excluded disabled individual from being able to maintain and apply for promotions within mainstream employment.

6.1.2. Requesting/needing support

Material and moral support mechanisms are forms of material-discursive practices enacted within and between bodies, sociomaterial spaces, and material objects such as equipment. As shown in Chapter 5, one of the main differences between the two types of employment explored was that the sheltered organisation was *pro-active* in the support they offered, whereas mainstream organisations were more *reactive*. Not all of the support needed was material, many of the respondents implicitly and explicitly referred to needing moral support from their colleague and line managers. This included needing a '*kinder attitude*' towards them and better communication '*just to check that everything is ok*'. Ongoing moral support was needed for all the participants to feel secure in their place of work. The findings of this thesis thus contributes to the limited body of work on support systems (e.g. Lewis et al., 2013) by providing knowledge on the material-discursive factors that affect support for two types of employment.

Whilst the difficulties in some jobs roles could be accommodated through support mechanisms, some employers would not or could not adjust their organisational

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policies/practices: this is a form of sociomaterial exclusion as the result of power relations. This supports the extant data of Kordovski et al. (2015) who explored the difficulties of securing accommodations. For instance, some employers reinforced capitalist productivity norms when they were concerned about the productivity of workers outside of the workplace, the impact of reduced working hours on the organisation, or the cost of the accommodation requested (Burke et al., 2013; Foster and Wass, 2013). These experiences were relationally affected by multiple intra-acting elements. For instance, Judith was repeatedly placed on evening shifts in an NHS hospital despite the known side effects of the post-cancer medication she was taking which affected her ability to safely carry out her job. This was exacerbated by high demands of the NHS, austerity measures (e.g. lack of NHS funding), and a staffing crisis resulting in increasing pressure on staff (Royal College of Nursing, 2019). The analysis revealed how all these factors reinforced oppressive capitalist norms enacted by managers or employers which have a performative capacity to exclude bodies that do not conform to these norms. These exclusionary material-discursive practices performatively enact bodies as disabled and/or gendered which led to individual enacting strategies such as changing careers to mitigate these oppressive practices (this will be discussed in section 6.3). By choosing to move to a new place of employment, the participants engaged in identity work, an activity to mitigate their disability or gender identity being construed in a negative way (Brown and Toyoki, 2013). Importantly, drawing on feminist posthumanist performativity, the actions of workers leaving workplaces or not challenging work systems ultimately feeds into reproducing the performative exclusionary practices of bodily production within capitalist systems of work (Barad, 2007).

As shown in the above example, the power relations of government enacting austerity measure have a relational affect on the practices enacted between and within organisations and services that support disabled women and men. As discussed in previous chapters, the phenomena of external government politics is formed from the relation of the ontological inseparability of intra-acting “components” such as austerity measures, party politics, and disability awareness (Barad, 2003, p. 815; Roulstone, 2015; Goodley, 2014). As discussed in Chapter 1, these are further relationally affected by regional or geographical politics such as local council funding and services, availability and access to organisations or services, and access to material resources (Bates et al., 2017; Pini and Conway, 2017). All these material-discursive practices intra-act in many different ways creating unique ‘spacetime-matter’ relations (Barad, 2007, 2014). This supports the ‘ontoepistemological’ argument of agential realism that knowing and being is the result of ongoing material-discursive practices that continuously alter and change (Barad, 2007). This thus challenges

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essentialist concepts such as disability and gender by critiquing the notion of a shared set of characteristics and experiences that denote homogeneity (Barad, 2003). In fact, projecting homogeneity onto bodies reinforces these humanist essentialist concepts that reproduce inequality (Braidotti, 2013a).

For some of the respondents, the interdependent relationship between bodies and technology such as a car or specialist software affected their intra-actions within and between sociomaterial spaces. For example, Jane who has autoimmune deficiency experiences issues when she intra-acts with the external world. If she was to travel to work on public transport, she would encounter matter including human body waste, such as sweat and saliva from coughs/sneezes which attaches to the non-human matter of the bus or train. If Jane was to come into contact with bacteria on the train/bus she would be susceptible to contracting a serious infection. Driving to work, although not as economical, limits the exposure she has to external contaminants. Therefore, like many others globally, having access to a car and parking space at work is vital to her embodiment and her performative ability to work. Consequently, it is important that organisations account for the embodiment of their employees and adjust their policies and practices to enable *all* employees to contribute to the organisation in an inclusive way. Although some were given material support aids, such as speech to text software, which promoted a more inclusive workspace, when other bodies were present and used the same sociomaterial spaces this disrupted the intra-action between the intended user and the software (i.e. microphone picking up other voices). This supports prior work that suggests that there can be flaws in the intended use of technology, for example as shown in Chapter 5 those who use speech to text software and work in an open plan office, shared offices, or poorly sound insulated offices disrupts the functionality of the software (Barla, 2016).

6.2. Contribution to disability and gender posthumanist performative studies

The second research question to be addressed is: how and in what way does the performative enactment of gender affect the experiences of disability in the workplace? This question is addressed by discussing how the findings expand the empirical and theoretical arguments discussed previously. This section is split into the following subsections: gendered organisations, and gendered and ableist norms.

6.2.1. Gendered organisations

Research has identified that organisational spaces and job roles are inherently gendered and entrenched with historical and cultural masculine or feminine behavioural social norms that

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employees are expected to uphold (Acker, 2012, 2006). Specific to disability and gender in the workplace, scholars have reported that disabled men working in a women-dominated industry, or disabled women working in a male-dominated industry, experience greater prejudice and discrimination (Sang et al., 2016; Woodhams et al., 2015a). The current analysis reveals how the entanglement of physical spaces, work policies, work culture, able-bodied and gendered norms effect how bodies were included or excluded within gendered organisations. The intra-actions did, however, vary across the two types of employment as each of the observations and interviews enacted an agential cut (a specific moment) within the ‘spacetime-matter’ relations observed (Barad, 2014). I argue, based on the data analysis and insights from feminist posthumanism, that most material-discursive practices enacted within organisations are bound within the power relations of politics (i.e. reactive and bound to social norms), rather than political power relations (i.e. transformative and embracing difference) (Braidotti, 2013b).

As discussed in Chapter 5, Able-Industries is a manufacturing workshop which was seen to enact masculine norms, also evidenced by the exclusion of women through the employment of twice as many men than women. Furthermore, the women employed were in traditionally feminine roles such as administration, cooking and cleaning which reinforced the performative gendered norms enacted within the space. Notably, the management team, particularly Joyce, did appear to challenge the performative enactment of normative gendered social norms, specifically that men were better suited to the manufacturing work than women. Joyce suggested that the women were more productive than the men, however, she infers this based on what bodies do (their capacity) rather than what bodies are, which moves away from enacted measures that “overprivileges vision” (i.e. the visible difference of bodies) (Braidotti, 2006, p. 2004). Although this deconstructs the discourses attached to the masculine space this still reproduced a bodily gender binary, albeit a reversal of the ‘traditional’ binary where men are hierarchically ‘superior’ to women. The findings are thus similar to Pecis and Priola (2019) study on how men enact masculine identities within dominant feminine workspaces. This does, however, demonstrate the difficulties in challenging binary dualisms without falling into a trap of reproducing them (Moss and Dyck, 1999), for example where the performative assumptions and privilege are shifted from men to women (Braunmühl, 2018).

Related to study two, the participants working in mainstream employment were employed in a number of different sectors and industries with different social norms enacted within the workplace. To illustrate, some of the disabled women were employed in

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‘feminine’ industries such as retail or in NHS roles which was evidenced by the fact that they mostly worked with other women who were largely able-bodied: this adds to extant studies that men and those who had a visible disability were excluded from these gendered spaces (Critten, 2016). There was evidence that disability was performatively enacted and constrained by disembodied organisational practices that failed to account for how an impairment intra-acted with the workspace and the pressure to enact embedded feminine social norms (i.e. women should be caring). For instance, Judith was tired when working night shifts due to her cancer medication side-effects which affected her ability to be caring and patient with her patients. Disability and gender were also seen to be performatively enacted as forms of oppression, particularly when a woman worked in a traditionally male industry such as the field of electrical engineering. On starting work, Jennifer could not uphold both the able-bodied and masculine normative behaviours and expectations of her job role: this adds support to previous studies such as Sang et al. (2016, p. 578) who explored the relational “gendered and ableist aspects of working practices”. Furthermore, when disabled men and women were seen to look or behave in an ‘atypical’ way, as they were measured against the social norms enacted by others in the space, this led to exclusionary practices. For instance, Colin was excluded by co-workers for enacting effeminate behaviour in a construction company, and Sarah was excluded from a beauty therapy role for not looking ‘normal’ or feminine enough. Those in the above examples, like others in previous studies, decided to leave their physical-based and/or visual-based profession for administrative-based jobs, where the material-discursive practices enacted within the sociomaterial workspace and the job role did not disqualify them or oppress them as much as their previous workplaces (Baumberg, 2015; Braidotti, 2016; Duffy and Dik, 2009). This, however, leaves the ableist and gendered norms of professions unchallenged.

Material-discursive practices were found to change over time and space. For instance industries that are historically and culturally seen to be feminine and masculine would enact practices to maintain these social norms. This includes excluding bodies that are seen to look or behave atypically during intra-actions within these sociomaterial spaces. Similar to Shuttleworth’s (2012) findings, whilst some of the respondents rejected or disrupted heteronormative masculine/feminine practices, they were aware of its grip on other’s perceptions of them based on their reactions during intra-actions. Colin, for example, experienced conflict between his disability and gender identity as breadwinner, as he was no longer able to provide for his family as he previously had. This supports Pini and Conway’s (2017) argument that employment was salient for disabled fathers’ identity formations. The findings also demonstrate how social norms, and the current neoliberal ideals are entrenched

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within everyday material-discursive practices. The analysis further reveals that essentialist gender-based material-discursive practices have a performative impact on disability as the gendered social norms attached to women and men bodies contradict or confirm stereotypical disability characteristics. This provides qualitative evidence of the findings of a quantitative experimental study by Nario-Redmond (2010) who explored the characteristics of disabled women and men.

While there have been attempts to conceptualise gender in the workplace, disability scholars have argued that these gender-based conceptualisations do not go far enough to reflect the embodied experiences of disabled people in the workplace. For example, the ‘glass cliff’ (Ryan and Haslam, 2005), the ‘glass ceiling’ (Wilson-Kovacs et al., 2008), or the ‘glass escalator’ demonstrate that able-bodied men benefit from their privileged status as being the ideal human and thus the ideal worker for leading organisations (Braidotti, 2016). Roulstone and Williams (2014) sought to address this with their conceptualisation of disability and gender, coining the term ‘glass partitions’. They found that disabled managers were worried about any internal or external job changes for fear this would affect their current stability. The analysis in this thesis moves away from these conceptual models, by drawing upon feminist posthumanist performativity which undertakes a more complex analysis that explores how discursive practices materialise over time and space to continuously enact or disrupt disability and gender as forms of oppression. For example, participants such as Jane and Sophie stayed within their job roles to prove their worth and values as employees to mitigate any oppressive practices that would performatively enact their bodies as being disabled. In fact, many of the respondents were pro-active in their careers to change jobs or apply for promotions as most experienced practices of oppression, but they would attempt to choose jobs or institutions that were more accommodating to their abilities than their previous job role.

Some feminist disability studies scholars, such as Garland-Thomson (2011, p. 598), have incorporated materiality into their theorisation of disability by arguing “that bodies are always situated in and dependent upon environment through which they materialize as fitting or misfitting”. The use of a feminist posthumanist performative lens, however, takes this argument one step further by arguing humans, other nonhuman bodies, and the environment are not situated in the world but they are *of the world* (Barad, 2007). More specifically it is only through a human being’s intra-action with other bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces, and the material-discursive practices enacted during these intra-actions, that disability, gender, class, age, and organisations come into being. Human beings,

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sociomaterial spaces and material objects thus have agency as they all have the capacity to affect their ongoing becoming as they intra-act with one another over time and space in ‘spacetime-matter’ relations (Barad, 2007).

6.2.2. *Able-bodied and gendered norms*

Historical and cultural gendered social norms persist within the western world: women are still expected to be the primary carer of a child and be in charge of household duties (Haraway, 2006). Women still face oppressive practices within the workplace as employers continue to reproduce these social norms, such as assuming women have less time to devote to organisational responsibilities if they have children (Sørensen, 2017). Women and those with impairments are therefore excluded or treated as inferior to men on the basis of expectations and historical cultural norms embedded within social spaces (Braidotti, 2016). These social norms are bound within power relations that are resistant to change which continues to reinforce binary thinking. Within the data there was evidence that normative gender discourses intra-acted with disability discourses to affect the performative enactment of disability and gender as forms of oppression within sociomaterial organisational spaces. Some of the disabled women and men endured multiple forms of oppression (i.e. ableism and sexism) both inside and outside of the workplace, such as being questioned whether their impairment actually affected them. For example, some of the women affected by invisible conditions were viewed as ‘*hysterical*’ or that their disability was psychosomatic, as discussed by Jane and Joyce. Equally, men felt the pressure to remain stoic and engender masculine norms to their own detriment. They received comments such as “*it’s nothing but a twinge in your back*’ and ‘*get your ass back to work*”: this supports previous studies that explored how masculinity affected how men performatively enact their disability and gender (Fleury et al., 2018, 2017). The findings within the thesis also this adds to the body of work that explores identity and appearance (e.g. Tazzyman, 2020; Howlett et al., 2015) by demonstrating the relational affect of organisational material-discursive practices in reproducing behavioural norms that performatively enact bodies as being disabled, feminine and masculine by visual bodily markers and the intra-action with material objects such as clothes, make-up and disability aids (e.g. wheelchair).

The theoretical framework of feminist posthumanist performativity was drawn upon during the analysis to explore how and in what way material-discursive practices performatively enacted disability and gender within the workplace and other sociomaterial spaces. For example, like Nario-Redmond et al.’s (2013) study, the type of impairment and how long individuals had had their impairment affected the ongoing intra-actions with other

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people, places and spaces that (re)enacted disability and gender. To illustrate, those who had a congenital impairment or had their impairment from a young age were judged and judged themselves against the social norms of ability, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality which are embedded and enacted within sociomaterial spaces and material objects. They claimed they were “*not the same*” or a “*black sheep*” compared to their able-bodied family and peers: they thus themselves drew upon social norms that are reinforced by power relations to performatively enact disability, gender, class etc as pejorative. The performative ideal of being able-bodied and feminine/masculine is so entrenched within everyday material-discursive practices that individuals are predisposed to (re)think and (re)act in certain ways. These ideals are commercialised and epitomised through storybooks, television programmes, toys (e.g. dolls), and clothing which saturates children’s social environments to the point that they internalise these cultural norms from a very young age (Sarpong, 2019; Filipović, 2018). These performative social norms were also entrenched within organisational material-discursive practices which excludes those who deviated from an employer’s or organisational normative expectations. For example, at Able-Industries Thomas’ Tourette syndrome vocalised tics were deemed inappropriate sounds within the workplace.

Many of respondents confidence and self-worth increased as they aged and engaged in life’s events such as marriage and parenthood (a further instilled normative behaviour), however, they still endured ongoing objectification of their disability during their social intra-actions with other bodies. This objectification disrupted their sense of self due to negative embodied experiences such as hatred, embarrassment, and frustration in being made to feel different (Slorach, 2016). This is exemplified in the example of Sarah who experiences the ‘non-disabled gaze’ (Loja et al., 2013, p. 193) when strangers broke social conventions by feeling that they had the right to stare, making Sarah feel a ‘freak’ and on public display. This aligns with the previously discussed historical development of disability-related intra-actions, such as public freakshows (Sandell et al., 2005). These intra-actions made Sarah engage in material forms of identity work by adopting strategies to hide her material difference during subsequent intra-actions, such as not wearing her glasses or walking behind other people. This adds evidence to the limited studies that explore sociomaterially and the material elements of identity work in managing identity formations (e.g. Symon and Pritchard, 2015). Others who had a congenital disability and grew up in a household with others who also had the same condition, such as Indra who was Deaf, had a much stronger sense of self and held a positive identity despite being subject to dominant ableist discourses. Whilst those with a congenital disability appeared to be less likely to

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personally see themselves as disabled, as found in Watson (2002), there was evidence of them still enacting oppressive practices on those with different types of disabilities. This adds further support of Nario-Redmond (2010) study that disabled individuals themselves evoke stereotypical discourses of disability.

The thesis also furthers knowledge on the performative enactment of disability and gender in exploring how the concept of normality affected bodily production. It was argued in Chapter 5 that normality is split into two categories: *looking* (ab)normal and *feeling* (ab)normal. The performative enactment of '(ab)normality' was affected by the intra-action of the material body, material objects such as technology and furniture, and the material-discursive practices encountered (or drawn upon) which affected the bodily production of the participants. Some individuals discussed how what bodies looked like and/or the use of material objects (e.g. wheelchair, crutch) performatively enacted their disability and gender. However, it was when bodies were measured against dominant social norms during their intra-actions with other bodies, objects, and spaces that oppressive practices were enacted which reinforced social norms that place particular bodies as inferior to dominant others (Braidotti, 2016, 2019). These oppressive practices reproduce historical social norms that attempt to classify bodies in homogeneous ways (i.e. all women are kind; all men are strong; all disabled people are less productive). For example, Colin and Sophie used a wheelchair sporadically to ease their fluctuating pain symptoms. A wheelchair, as with other material supports (crutches, hearing aids, glasses), is a technology designed to aid with a bodily function (Feely, 2016; Dale and Latham, 2015). However, similar to prior studies (e.g. Cross, 2013), participants report that they were outright judged or feared being seen to be frauds by able-bodied individuals for enacting behaviours considered atypical for wheelchair users (e.g. getting up and walking). The wheelchair, thus, became entangled with the human material body, they became one and the same, a hybrid of human and machine (Haraway, 2006). This demonstrates how the development of technology, biopolitics, geopolitics such as healthcare systems, material resources, bodies, and sociomaterial spaces such as hospitals or government buildings intra-act to affect the co-production of knowing and being through the performative enactment of disability, gender, class, ethnicity, age etc.

Within organisational spaces entrenched capitalist norms further produce bodies as disabled and gendered due to the fear that these workers will lower productivity and profit margins (Braidotti, 2016, 2019). There were a number of instances of this. For instance, Sarah was judged not to *look* the part when applying for a beauty therapist job as she had a visual physical disability and needed to wear glasses with one eyepiece frosted. The

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employer made her *feel* inadequate based on his performative assumptions informed by her physical appearance: this supports previous discrimination-based studies such as Lindsay et al. (2019, 2014) and Street and Major, 2014. Sarah's disability and gender were thus performatively enacted as a form of oppression during these intra-actions and she experienced both ableism (Goodley, 2014; Campbell, 2009) and hostile sexism as she was, according to her employer and the social norms inherent to the job role and sociomaterial space, 'unable' to adhere to these normative expectations (Reilly et al., 2017). In addition, some of the women felt under pressure to hide their impairment to avoid the enactment of disability oppressive practices whilst looking professional and feminine. As reported by Pachankis (2007) this adds to the mental fatigue of performing to dominant social norms and attempting to pass for 'normal'. By hiding their disability identity and enduring negative intra-actions within the workplace this arguably reinforces disability as pejorative and dominant social norms persist (Braidotti, 2006). Drawing on feminist posthumanism performativity this highlights the difficulties in 'becoming-minor', a positive form of being not located as other to Man or non-disabled. The data however supports the claim that "marginal subjects who inhabit multiple locations of devalued difference have their own task cut out for them" as they themselves reproduce and reinforce the social norms that continue to socially exclude bodies (Braidotti, 2006, p. 344).

Choice, as a concept, has been previously theorised as being performative (Sørensen, 2017, p. 310) as it produces "dichotomies and differences by [giving] the appearance of individual agency". However, it leaves the power structures and practices which exclude those labelled as 'other' intact. The choices the respondents made such as whether or not disclose their disability, choosing to leave their oppressive workplace, or choosing not to perform domestic chores affected the performative enactment of disability and/or gender. The actions of the women and men differed depending on whether or not they had children, the age of their children, and their childcare arrangements. For instance, Sarah (Mainstream) 'chose' to adopt a more traditional caregiving role after giving birth, and claimed that she could not have coped with the enduring oppressive work practices whilst looking after her child. Indra (Sheltered) also 'chose' to work part-time so she could look after her children before and after school whilst her husband worked full-time at Able-Industries. Jane, Sharon, Diana, Joyce, Sasha, and Sophie, on the other hand, had children who were reaching (or had reached) adulthood so their roles as mothers were less demanding and they could focus their time and energy on their jobs. Jane (Mainstream), however, had a twenty-year gap in full-time employment as she 'chose' to prioritise looking after her children and her health: she stated that, with her condition, she could not have managed to work and care for the family,

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although she volunteered for local community support groups. Critical-based scholars such as Haraway (2006, p. 133) have highlighted how women in particular are subject to increasing demands “to sustain daily life for themselves as well as for men, children, and old people” whilst experiencing precarious forms of employment.

Although the above findings are framed within a feminist posthumanist performative lens the findings also expands prior intersectional studies (e.g. Brown, 2014; Kavanagh et al., 2015) by incorporating a sociomaterial focus of oppression that crosses “social and material lines and integrates them in a complex entanglement” (Weasel, 2016, p. 114). Whilst some research has looked at the discursive identities of men separate to women (e.g. Shuttleworth et al., 2012), the current analysis adds to this by exploring the performative enactment of identities of disabled women and men. For instance, like men, some of the women rejected or reformulated material-discursive practices that enact disability and gender in one sociomaterial space to prioritise their intra-actions within another space. Specifically, the women prioritized intra-actions in organisational spaces over their traditional ‘female’ roles within the home by abandoning tasks such as cooking and cleaning. Similar to prior studies, the women instead directed their energy reserves to maintain their organisational performance to sustain their economic security and promote a positive sense of self by contributing to society (Bé, 2019). However, this reinforces neoliberal social norms: the women felt bound to economically support themselves at the cost of their health and social relations within the home. This relates to two material-discursive practices: capitalist social norms which stress the importance of participation in the labour market, and neoliberal social norms which stress that each individual is responsible for their own success and failures. Both continue to performatively enact disability and gender as forms of oppression, such as being excluded from full-time employment due to assumed lower productivity. This is evidenced in official statistics that show the employment gap (see Chapter 1) between those labelled able-bodied and disabled, and women and men (Charmaz, 2019). Although working was discussed as mentally fulfilling by the respondents which disrupt performative norms which portray disability as pejorative, the daily intra-actions such as moving within and between the sociomaterial spaces often had physical and cognitive toll on their bodies which negatively affected their embodiment (Arruza et al., 2019). This toll required them to recuperate once home to be ‘well’ enough to return to work. This meant that they had a skewed work-life balance in favour of work, a practice which, as reported by Bloom (2016), is sustained by capitalist societal and organisational norms.

To summarise the entanglement of material and discursive practices are “produced through dominant relations of power, which result in the construction of boundaries (both of values *and* materialities) which cut between that to be included and that to be excluded, that to be counted and that to be discounted” (Dale and Latham, 2015, p. 171, original emphasis). The findings within the thesis thus demonstrate how (un)ethical and (dis)embodied practices (e.g. Dale and Latham, 2015, Pullen and Rhodes, 2015) in the workplace reproduce bodies as either being disabled or gendered. The analysis also revealed that both those in mainstream and sheltered employment experienced conflict due to masculine and able-bodied expectations in employment. The findings also add to studies that have explored how men negotiate their disability and gender identity (e.g. Pini and Conway, 2017; Gerschick and Miller, 1994) by showing how women also engage with the three R framework (reinforce, reject and reformulate). Importantly, men *and* women engage with the same processes to challenge essentialist gender and ableist material-discursive practices that reproduce disability and gender as forms of oppression. The ableist and gendered material-discursive practices within organisations performatively enact disability, gender, class, age, and ethnicity which individuals have to overcome (if possible), or face oppressive and ethical consequences such as poverty, homelessness, further ill health, or violence (Braidotti, 2013a, 2013b, 2016, 2019). Without organisational accountability and change, this will not alter the exclusionary practices and ridged work systems that uphold normative and exclusionary practices.

6.3. Contribution to performative organisation and management studies: disrupting oppressive practices in the workplace

The research question to be addressed in this section is: How are oppressive material-discursive practices enacted within organisational spaces resisted or disrupted by disabled women and men? By drawing on feminist new materialism, specifically feminist posthumanist performativity (Barad, 2003, 2007), it has been shown how complex and entangled the embodiment of disabled women and men in the workplace really is. The analysis revealed that identity work, an ongoing activity to manage identity formation or overcome identity conflicts, can be framed as a material-discursive practice that is enacted during agential intra-actions that performatively exclude particular human bodies for being disabled and/or being a woman or man. The intra-actions which affect the bodily production of the participants is co-constituted with other human and non-human bodies as well as historical and cultural bound ethical practices (i.e. acceptable behaviours) (Dale and Latham, 2015). Importantly, then, bodily production is not the sole product of intra-actions with other

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people, nor is it purely the product of intra-acting with sociomaterial spaces; it is a far more complex configuration of a number of factors, as shown in Figure 6.1 at the beginning of this chapter. As discussed above, this thesis adds to the feminist posthumanist performativity debates on disability and gender by demonstrating how bodily production, specifically knowing and being, is the result of ongoing open intra-actions with other bodies, spaces and material-discursive practices that govern (non)normative behaviour (Barad, 2007). Such complexity has been analysed by a few theoretical and empirical studies, such as Feely (2016) and Moss and Dyck (1999), who show the importance of considering wider factors that coalesce to affect a particular moment, or an agential cut, observed/recorded within the data. As shown in Chapter 5, the analysis accounted for the inseparability of discursive practices and material phenomena both inside and outside of the workplace and how they fluctuated over time: this addresses the gaps identified in previous chapters such as the ongoing disembodied theorisation of identity (Knights and Clarke, 2017). Many of the respondents engaged in material forms identity work when they experienced particular exclusionary intra-actions that materialised the body as being disabled or gendered. The participants' sense of self was, thus, not stable but was instead dynamic to reflect the ongoing changes in their intra-actions with their sociomaterial world. The next section will discuss the importance of transformative affirmative ethics that the research participants experienced or enacted to mitigate the oppressive practices they faced.

6.3.1. The importance of transformative affirmative ethics

Material markers of difference are not only performative, they are etched into the flesh in that visible markers of impairment are experienced within the body (e.g. pain, stress), and sex is seen and read by others. Human bodies are measured by others bodies on their 'value' as their material bodies become entangled and co-constituted within sociomaterial spaces. It is therefore important to consider how external material-discursive practices (e.g. politics) affect embodiment within the workplace. As is discussed above in Chapter 3 and evidenced in Chapter 5, disability and gender are performatively enacted during intra-actions with other people, material objects and sociomaterial spaces (Barad, 2007, 2003; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The findings reveal that organisational practices sustain inequality as they often require workers to adhere to a one-size-fits-all system. For example, when employers or co-workers implicitly or explicitly excluded them or discriminated against them by booking inaccessible meeting rooms or refusing to let workers work from home when they experienced oppressive practices in the workplace. This required the participants to adopt strategies (e.g. identity work) to mitigate or disrupt any oppressive practices, for instance

reducing working hours or leaving their job to mitigate the conflict in the performative enactment of organisational and personal identities.

The data analysis revealed that there were a number of instances in which employees, employers, or organisations reinforced, constrained or challenged material-discursive practices that surround disabled bodies. Specifically, the findings support previous studies that organisations are key sites for engaging in identity work (Brown, 2017). For instance, the respondents either reinforced, rejected, or reformulated their performative identities in the workplace by choosing to change, and/or adapt to, their place of employment and their job role(s) to overcome the oppressive practices. The findings also add to limited research that demonstrates how material phenomena within sociomaterial space also affect the identity work of the disabled women and men (Symon and Pritchard, 2015). For instance, the use of work equipment (e.g. chairs, desks, speech to text software) can constrain or facilitate an individual's work ability which affected their bodily productions experiences of inclusion or exclusion. The respondents often changed jobs to address the negative affect of intra-actions within the workplace such as physical and cognitive fatigue to maintain a positive sense of self (Baldrige and Kulkarni, 2017; Baumberg, 2015). It is important to stress, however, that these strategies leave the exclusionary practices intact as the individual looks to mitigate negative experiences by seeking a new and hopefully better environment, rather than challenging the systems they intra-act with. This support the extant work of Foster (2018) who critically explores how system of work exclude disabled bodies. There is, therefore, a lack of ethical accountability within organisations and more broadly society for the reported exclusionary practices (Barad, 2011). This is frustrated by a lack of power available to the employees to change the employment systems they encounter, as discussed in section 6.1.

For those who worked in sheltered employment, there was a sense of belonging, or positive organisational identification, that was not always present in those who worked in mainstream employment. This was related to the culture of the workplace, such as knowing that others had an impairment and that everyone was in the '*same boat*'. For the most part, there was a lack of judging bodies against dominant bodily norms, although as shown in the example of Boris and Thomas this was not always the case (Braidotti, 2016). The observations and the interview data at Able-Industries adds empirical support to Randel et al. (2018) theoretical study on inclusive leadership, as the inclusive practices enacted by the management team led to an acceptance of employees' bodily/cognitive/neurological impairments and their different performative abilities. However, the assemblage of factors

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that surround Able-Industries, such as being a low-skilled gendered industry, being a charity-based organisation, neoliberal capitalist norms, inconsistent sources of funding, and an equally inconsistent revenue (dependent on the rate of production) affected its financial ability to fulfil its charitable aims.

Overcoming these oppressive and exclusionary practices, through the enactment of transformative practices that affirm the values of all bodies, was seen to reduce pressures and expectations to work at the same pace as their more able-bodied peers (Braidotti, 2016). To overcome the oppressive politics enacted within and between sociomaterial spaces requires the enactment of counter affirmative political practices: this rejects binary thinking “notably the self-other distinction and the dialectics of otherness that underscores it” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 25). The data analysis shows how the enactment of transformative material-discursive practices also aligns with the concept of identity work that is defined as “the many ways in which people create, adapt, signify, claim and reject identities from available resource” (Brown, 2007, p. 298). The issue then lies with the unchallenged and essentialist material-discursive practices that continue to pervade mainstream workplaces that have ‘forced’ those deemed ‘other’ to seek alternative work in spaces that claim to enact transformative practices. The oppressive practices enacted within many organisations as reported in this study, and in multiple other studies, will, therefore, continue to exclude workers who fail to adhere to these dominant capitalist norms.

To summarise, the culture of a workplace and the rules and norms attached to a space or job role were seen to performatively enact disability and gender as a form of oppression. The respondents faced exclusions as the practices enacted within the sociomaterial workspace often reinforced the behavioural social norms that reproduce binary thinking. Those who struggled to uphold the expected levels of performance often have to engage in their own material-discursive practices, such as identity work, to attempt to overcome these oppressive practices. These attempts are hindered by instilled disembodied organisational policies and practices, hence why many of the participants sought alternative workplaces with different work systems that intra-acted more positively with their abilities. Many of the employees in sheltered employment had previously worked in mainstream employment but they could not sustain these jobs due to other’s able-bodied expectations and their (in)ability to find an appropriate work-life balance that did not negatively affect their physical and mental health. When disabled women and men worked in a supportive workplace which adapted the procedures to the person’s needs, this had a significant impact on an individual’s sense of self.

As identified in chapter 2 and 5 there are a number of strategies that individuals can adopt to overcome the oppressive material-discursive practices that performatively enact their disability and gender as pejorative. Prior research (e.g. Foster, 2018; Williams and Mavin, 2012) has identified a lack of organisational research that explores different material bodies and discourses beyond the entrenched norms. This results in organisational practices informed by able-bodied and masculine norms which reinforces exclusionary practices, as is discussed in multiple chapters of this thesis. The findings in this thesis address this gap by exploring how material-discursive practices that performatively enact identity within organisational spaces are, to borrow from Gerschick and Miller's (1994) three R framework, reinforced, rejected and/or reformulated.

For many of the respondents working took a physical toll on them (e.g. fatigue and pain) and they often needed rest days to recover, for example, a day mid-week or a shorter working week (Foster, 2018). This type of working arrangement was treasured by those in sheltered employment. Joyce (Sheltered, Manager) relied on the flexibility and the understanding of her colleagues so that if her condition was to flare up, as it was impossible to predict, she knew it would be accommodated with no repercussions. She knew she would struggle working in a mainstream organisations that enacted one-size-fits-all practices that discipline workers who cannot sustain contracted working hours. Similar to previous studies, an important strategy for many of the participants was choosing to work either part-time or in a flexible work environment (Lewis et al., 2013). However, the data analysis revealed a lack of awareness from employers, particularly in mainstream organisations, on how a worker's impairment relationally affected their intra-actions within their workspaces. This was reflected in the short-term concessions made, such as working from home, with the expectation from employers that their employees would have return to the office after a set period or they would have to leave. Similar to previous studies (e.g. Hutchinson et al., 2018; Calderón-Almendros and Calderón-Almendros, 2016), those seeking to enter employment sought to transcend oppressive practices within workspaces that performatively enacted disability as a form of oppression through elevating their education level and skill set. Accessing education and developing new skill sets allowed the participants to overcome the material-discursive practices that focus on what bodies are rather than the capacity of bodies (what they can do).

Similar to Critten's (2016) study on the transition to employment for Nick who had cerebral palsy, the participants noted that the transitional period on starting or returning to

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employment was filled with uncertainty and unpredictability. There were multiple examples of transition phases within the data including moving from school to work, re-entering work post-impairment, changing career, entering a new job role, leaving employment, and the death of carer/family/friend. The data analysis in Chapter 5 revealed the assemblage of intra-acting factors and material-discursive practices that affected the participants intra-active becoming. These factors included:

- organisational policies and practices for new or returning employees;
- bodily ability;
- type of job role (e.g. working hours, job responsibilities);
- type of industry;
- the material environment and the expected practices and behaviours;
- government regulations and laws;
- geographical infrastructure (e.g. transport availability, home location, work locations);
- responsibilities of the employee (e.g. childcare, hospital appointments),
- support systems available;
- individual aids (e.g. medical devices or medicines/drugs); and
- individual differences of human beings (i.e. personality, sense of self, believes, drives).

This list is not exhaustive but like Figure 6.1 presented above, it intends to provide the reader with a relational understanding of the complexity of daily intra-actions and how they mutually affect one another. Although transitions are experienced by everyone they create uncertainty for disabled individuals as the norms that coalesce around the aforementioned practices create a multitude of barriers which affect societal participation. A common strategy adopted by the respondents on entering and throughout their employment was choosing to disclose or conceal their disability status to other people to avoid the aforementioned oppressive practices. Similar to the literature discussed in Chapter 2, there was a disparity in the way that the respondents disclosed, or did not disclose, their disability (Frndak et al., 2015; Santuzzi et al., 2014; von Schrader et al., 2014; Jans et al., 2012; Irvine, 2011). Some felt that it was important to be upfront to potential employers to remain authentic to themselves and to inform their employer what accommodations they needed to avoid oppressive practices during daily intra-actions (Jans et al. 2012). They thus moved away from dominant social norms by transforming their sense of self from pejorative to drawing on an affirmative ethics where their difference is valued (Braidotti, 2019). In

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contrast, aligning with Pachankis (2007) study, those who did attempt to pass for ‘normal’ found this negatively affected their physical and mental well-being. Like previous studies, some participants were adamant that disclosing their disability would harm their chances of successful employment opportunities (Shier et al., 2009). The findings for those in mainstream employment were similar to those reported by Syma (2019) and Jans et al. (2012) that those with visible disabilities are more likely to disclose their disability, but those with invisible disabilities choose to conceal their disability in order to pass for ‘normal’ or rather able-bodied. This demonstrates the difficulties in individuals disrupting binary dualisms to enacting a more affirmative ethics that “transcends negativity” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 206).

As reported in prior studies, those in mainstream employment often experienced exclusions to full employment participation due to their employer’s lack of procedures or strategies to effectively manage a diverse workforce (Boehm and Dwertmann, 2014; Moore et al., 2011). Participants such as Colin, Sarah, Sharon, and Penny were honest with their employers as to their abilities, but this was not fully considered by their employer. Colin felt excluded at the school where he worked when they scheduled classes on the top floor which Colin could not access without great difficulty (Oliver, 1990). Similarly Sarah was not materially or morally supported when her pain increased and she experienced physical difficulties in the later stages of her pregnancy which exacerbated her conditions. These examples demonstrate how disembodied organisational practices are entangled with other human bodies, material objects, and sociomaterial spaces to performatively enact disability as form of oppression (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015). For those in mainstream employment, there was often an expectation placed onto employees’ impaired bodies that they would recover which for some led to their decision to leave the workplace: this was not evident for those in sheltered employment. Further to this, there was affective response (e.g. confusion) from employers when an individual looked ‘well’ (or able-bodied) and they were thus expected to uphold able-bodied norms, which was unattainable by most as it resulted in exclusionary practices. This provides additional evidence to a recent study which argues that human beings enact a binary of wellness or ill-health, based on material bodily cues, which are informed by “problematic cultural codes that [performatively] sustain ableism” (Bé, 2019, p. 14). A consequence of these cultural codes was that Colin, Sarah and Penny made the decision to leave their jobs due to their ongoing negative intra-actions within their workspaces and the impact this was having on their well-being. As found in prior studies, they left employment to prioritise their own physical and mental well-being over their organisational participation (Vick and Lightman, 2010). For some leaving employment was

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a permanent change, whereas others took a break from employment and then sought new employment opportunities that appeared more inclusive to their abilities. For example, Sarah and Colin both volunteered as teaching assistants, and Sophie volunteered for the MS society. The discussion now moves on to discuss how those in senior positions within organisations instigated organisational strategies to mitigate the oppressive and exclusionary material-discursive practices of disability and gender in the workplace.

6.3.3. Organisational strategies

It has been argued in prior studies (e.g. Gill, 2005) that working in alternative employment, such as sheltered employment, perpetuates the ongoing reification of ableism through exclusion to mainstream employment. However, I argue here that the research participants who sought and applied for jobs in alternative employment saw this as a way of overcoming the oppressive mainstream practices which excluded them based on what their bodies are (e.g. disabled, women, men). Although Able-Industries claimed to adopt inclusive practices, there was still evidence that it enacted its own form of exclusionary practices as discussed in Chapter 5. Nonetheless, the management team sought to transform the material-discursive practices they enacted within the workplace to create an inclusive environment that valued the employees for their differences. The management team, therefore, drawing their own and their employees' memories of enduring exclusionary and oppressive practices within mainstream employment, sought to enact "a more human and sustainable social system" within the workshop (Braidotti, 2005, p. 347). This included supporting both current and prior employees across a number of sociomaterial spaces. Importantly, however, it was observed that these practices were not always prioritised over the dynamics of the organisation. Linking this back to Dale and Burrell's (2000) analogy of comparing the functionality of organisations to the biological systems within bodies, Able-Industries' daily intra-actions between workers, technology/equipment/materials, social norms of the space, and the physical environment all mutually affected one another on an ongoing basis which affected the intra-active becoming of the organisation.

The practices within Able-Industries are also entangled with additional external assemblages of power relations including politics (local and national practices), organisational/professional body regulations, funding bodies, and clients. These economic and business pressures resulted in some instances of 'unavoidable' deviation from its moral obligations as it enacted more capitalist practices by asking employees to work faster or more consistently; this led to the performative enactment of disability and/or gender as oppressive. However, these instances prompted the organisation to reflect on these

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exclusionary practices and they, where feasible, further adapted the working practices to make the space and job roles as inclusive as possible for the employees. Consequently, there appears to be a conflict between the workshop's ethics of care and disembodied business practices. For instance, despite being employed in a disabled-friendly organisation there were examples of employees being excluded in their working environment due to their 'deviance' from established normative behaviours and difficult intra-actions with material objects (e.g. Thomas and Boris): they experienced a misfit as theorised by Garland-Thomson (2011). Therefore, when particular bodies and behaviours become established within a particular space they become the social norm which then leads to binary thinking that excludes those who deviate from these norms. This shows how important it is for employers to continually critically reflect on how their policies and practices affect the inclusion or exclusion of particular bodies.

The difference between the two types of employment, or more broadly the difference between the positive and the negative intra-actions reported, related to the knowledge and understanding of disability and how this effects an employee's ability to work. To address this, feminist disability scholar Garland-Thomson (2017, p. 325) has argued for the development and implementation of 'disability bioethics', specifically a "disability cultural competence" across society. This is needed to address the sociomaterial exclusions all individuals (regardless of ability) may face. The management team at Able-Industries sought to implement 'disability bioethics' through their established relationships with mainstream employers. This included challenging entrenched and oppressive able-bodied norms that mainstream employers had, by arranging mainstream employers to visit Able-Industries to see the capabilities of disabled workers. The ongoing relationships with mainstream employers also provided opportunities for the Able-Industries' management to alter the oppressive practices that mainstream employers enacted, such as providing advice on the type of support they needed to provide for their disabled employees whilst dispelling any concerns. This furthers academic knowledge on disability support by showing that employers with no prior disability awareness need ongoing face-to-face (or material-discursive) practical-based support rather than relying on written discursive and decontextualized information.

Although the type of employment appeared to have an impact (positive, negative, or both) on embodied experiences, there were still difficulties for those in sheltered employment which is geared to support those with disabilities. The management team at Able-Industries had in recent years noticed the effect of Sayce's (2011) report on the number

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of funding spaces and the dwindling waiting list to access the workshop. Joyce claimed that there was a long waiting list at one point, but those who would benefit most were now not offered a position at the workshop. They claim that outside agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus, would judge individuals on their (in)ability to secure mainstream employment and therefore denied some disabled individuals an opportunity to work at the workshop. Joyce inferred this was a political number game so that the statistics would show a positive figure – demonstrating that those who entered sheltered employment were able to move on to mainstream employment – providing quantitative evidence on the positive impact of the Work Choice programme. There is, therefore, an ethical consideration that needs to be discussed. The Government and related disability ‘support’ agencies are enacting exclusionary practices that performatively enact some disabilities as forms of oppression by dictating the movement (or not) of bodies into organisational institutions based on political agendas; this is an example of biopolitics (Braidotti, 2013; Coole and Frost, 2010). This reinforces dominant social norms and prevents the implementation of transformative practices that recognise the value of all human bodies (Braidotti, 2006).

To summarise there were a number of personal or organisational strategies that were adopted by those who took part in this project. This included the personal control of information through the intra-actions with their employers and colleagues, however, the decision to disclose their disability was affected by their support needs and the culture of the workplace. Organisational strategies by Able-Industries included engagement with the wider community and local businesses to promote the ability of disabled workers and to challenge preconceived stereotypical perceptions of disability. The current analysis thus challenges entrenched essentialist social norms by demonstrating the transformative effect of affirmative ethics which moves beyond the negative discourses historically attached to bodies (Braidotti, 2006, 2013b; Mladenov, 2018). For instance, it shows how normative material-discursive practices can be *transformed to accommodate* disabled men and women in the workplace (a form of inclusion), instead of disabled individuals *having to adapt* to fit within their workplace (a form of exclusion). Although the latter was often an expectation of those in mainstream employment there were examples of this in the sheltered employment, such as Thomas who was excluded as he did not fit within the normative behaviours present at the workshop (he was expected to adapt which was not feasible). The implications of the thesis are discussed next.

6.4. Implications of the project

This section of the discussion considers the implications of the project for theory, practice and policy.

6.4.1. *Implications for theory*

This thesis has explored the concepts of disability and gender within the social, cultural and political context of employment. By drawing on two types of employment and critically analysing the data with a feminist posthumanist performative lens, this thesis has shown how multiple mutually affecting material-discursive practices coalesce around and within organisational institutions to performativity enact bodies as disabled or gendered. Furthermore, it has also shown how these practices maintain or challenge normative binary dualisms (Braidotti, 2013a, 2013b). To refer back to the introduction, the data analysis has shown that:

identity is not essence, fixity or givenness, but a contingent iterative performativity, thereby reworking this alleged conflict into an understanding of difference not as an absolute boundary between object and subject, here and there, now and then, this and that, but rather as the effects of enacted cuts *in a radical reworking of cause/effect*.

(Barad, 2014, p. 173-174, original emphasis).

By drawing on feminist posthumanist performativity, this project has shown how and in what way disability, gender and other identities (and their intersectionality) are performatively enacted during intra-actions with other bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces. Often the material-discursive practices enacted during intra-actions are informed by dominant social norms that result in the exclusion of disabled women and men within sociomaterial spaces. As a result their disability and/or their gender (or class, ethnicity, age) become a form of oppression as it prevents them from full social participation (Thomas, 1999). As shown throughout this thesis the theoretical framework adopted states that embodiment is co-constituted between material phenomenon and discursive practices that are:

a heterogeneous array of discursive elements and practices that encompass, *without privileging any one modality* [added emphasis], the affective, the political, the institutional, and the biological. All are linked together, cross over, and become more or less mutually – albeit provisionally- incorporated in

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unpredictable assemblages that figure both the affirmation of becoming-otherwise *and* [original emphasis] the potential emergence of new organizations of power.

(Shidrick, 2015, p. 17-18)

This thesis has, therefore, provided a number of empirical and theoretical contributions which have multidisciplinary relevance in the following ways. First, this is the first empirical study of its kind that has explored how disability and gender are performatively enacted across two types of employment (and other sociomaterial spaces) and how this affected the participants' embodied experiences. This project has shown how and in what way multiple material-discursive practices that surround the research participants in their sociomaterial spaces intra-act with one another to become mutually affective. These unique intra-actions, accounting for their specificity and historical and cultural lineage, result in specific moments of knowing and being. Second, to the best of my knowledge, it is also the first study to use feminist posthumanist performativity to empirically explore how knowing and being is complex and context-specific across different employment contexts related to disability and gender. Third, the thesis expands the theory of feminist posthumanist performativity by advancing knowledge on a previously neglected area of research, specifically disability and gender, within the context of different employment systems. For instance, it has been evidenced that the performative enactment of identity is not static but is an ongoing open practice that alters and changes through 'spacetime-matter' relations (Barad, 2014). Furthermore, the analysis has demonstrated how disability and gender related exclusions are sociomaterially enacted (therefore performative) by the instilled work systems and wider political and cultural practices (Dale and Latham, 2015). The thesis further expands feminist posthumanist performativity by diffractively analysing the data with insights from other critical-based theoretical framework specifically feminism (Arruzza et al., 2019; Morris, 1993), critical disability studies (Goodley et al., 2019; Goodley, 2013), and feminist disability studies (Hall, 2011; Garland-Thomson, 2005). Fourth, the findings add to a number of growing theoretical debates on the global impact of dominant and power-laden capitalist and neoliberalist norms on those who are deemed 'other' by those in a position of authority (Dale and Latham, 2015; Braidotti, 2013a, 2013b; 2016; 2019). These critical debates consider the impact of human (in)action on the (in)stability of the planet and its effect on all animate and inanimate matter (Johncock, 2017; Braidotti, 2013a).

The thesis has highlighted just how entangled and interconnected living, non-living and inanimate material bodies are. Furthermore, it also shows how normative linguistic

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terms, behaviours, and characteristics become attached to material bodies (human and non-human) in ways that define them as ‘other’ to create, or rather performatively enact, boundaries and exclusions (Dale and Latham, 2015; Barad, 2007, 2003). The entanglement of multiple material-discursive practices results in specific intra-actions and agential cuts between human and non-human embodiment (Barad, 2007). Nonetheless, these normative material-discursive practices can be challenged when individuals transform their own performative enactment of bodily production (from negative to positive) and challenge other people’s performative enactment of dominant social norms. It is clear that binary identity categories such as men-women and able-bodied-disabled are problematic when they narrowly bind individuals as only having the capacity to be one or the other, and those who break with these conventions are ostracised as ‘other’, ‘deviant’, ‘queer’, or ‘abnormal’ (Braidotti, 2016). As discussed in Chapter 3, I agree with other feminist new materialist scholars that there is no universal biological body therefore binary dualism can be challenged. The findings of this project have also addressed a key critique, that many identity scholars conduct disembodied and discursive focused research by conducting an embodied analysis that is both material and discursive (Knights and Clarke, 2017). Although previous studies are informative they do not go far enough to account for the multiple intersecting factors (material and discursive) that affect the lived experiences of the individuals explored in their studies. For instance, Sang et al., (2016, p. 567) claim that the “use of language is key to examining disability”, and whilst it is recognised that language plays a part in the thesis’ analysis, materiality (and what entanglements affect this) was of equal significance in the examination of disability and gender in the workplace.

This thesis has provided additional critiques of various theoretical and philosophical positionings, namely social constructivism and positivism. As has been demonstrated in the last two chapters, social constructivism is not ontologically and epistemologically sufficient to account for the embodied and material elements that continuously affect knowing and being, due to a sole focus on the discursive (Barnwell, 2017). Evidence is also presented to philosophically and theoretically show how the material and the discursive elements of analysis are inseparable, and that there are multiple material-discursive practices which converge to affect and/or co-constitute knowing and being for human, non-human and non-living matter (Kirby, 2017; Feely, 2016; Barad, 2007, 2003). The analysis further contributes to theoretical and empirical debates on the non-innocent nature and entanglement of all matter (Feely, 2016; Dale and Latham, 2015; van der Tuin and Dolphijn, 2010) by analysing how inanimate matter (e.g. buildings, natural resources, technology) are entangled with

animate material bodies in mutually affective ways within the current political economy to include or exclude (non)human bodies (Coole and Frost, 2010).

6.4.1.1. Alternative to the dominant models of disability

The three dominant models of disability (medical, social, social relational) were discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. It has been suggested that the medical model and the social of disability do not adequately account for the intersection of the private (i.e. impairment effects) and public (i.e. social oppression) elements of the embodied experiences of an impairment and a disability (Thomas, 1999; Goodley, 2011). It was argued that of the three models, the social relational model of disability was more open to the complex interactions of impairment (individual/material) and disability (society/discursive) (Thomas, 1999). The social relational model, however, does not adequately account for the posthumanist material elements that impact the reproduction of disability and gender in the workplace. For instance, the development of the Nuance speech to text software provides employment opportunities for those with a number of physical impairments who cannot use traditional office equipment without difficulty or discomfort. Therefore, whilst scholars using the models of disability have sought to address the social injustice and exclusions of those labelled disabled, many do not go far enough to incorporate materiality (i.e. considering all matter), time, and space (with some exceptions e.g. Freund, 2001). This research project thus contributes to disability studies, through expanding Tomas's (1999) social relational model, by demonstrating the performative impact of sociomaterial spaces and material-discursive practices acknowledging their entanglement with wider historical, cultural, political, and biological factors which affect embodiment and create specific material-discursive intra-actions. This thesis has moved away from the normative and essentialist definitions attached to identity categories, by instead observing the wider historical and cultural factors that coalesce to cause and effect knowing and being through ongoing 'spacetime-matter' relations (Barad, 2014). As shown in Chapter 5, the research participants experiences are unique to their intra-actions, but it is clear there is a myriad of material-discursive factors, that cannot be separated from one another, that results in the specific intra-actions reported.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I claimed to theoretically expand upon the social relational model of disability that defines disability as form of social oppression (Thomas, 1999; Thomas and Corker, 2004; Sang et al., 2016). Whilst similarly defining disability as form of oppression, I have expanded the social relational model by drawing on the theoretical framework of feminist posthumanist performativity. I have instead proposed a sociomaterial affective model of disability and gender. A sociomaterial affective model, drawing on the

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insight from critical-based feminist scholars such as Braidotti (2019) and Barad (2007), theoretically examines the complexity and co-constitutive power relations within the assemblage of material-discursive factors that performatively enact disability and/or gender within sociomaterial spaces. As is visually shown in Figure 6.1 at the beginning of this chapter, there are numerous factors within an assemblage and each factor relationally affects the other factors that it intra-acts with (as shown by the double pointed arrows) (see Deluze and Guattari, 1988). However, each factor (e.g. organisational procedures) has its own assemblage of factors that unpredictably affect the practices enacted within this factor. As discussed by Fox and Alldred (2017), and evidenced in the data analysis, the relational affect within and between assemblages are also subject to constant fluctuations. The degree of fluctuations and unpredictability within the assemblages was evident in the data, particularly the participant observations, as the intra-actions and the affect economies within and between bodies, material objects and sociomaterial spaces were seen to alter and change due to changeable entanglements of 'spacetime-matter' relations (Barad, 2014). Disability and gender then performatively come into being as forms of oppression through ongoing affective intra-actions between sociomaterial spaces and material bodies and the material-discursive practices enacted during these intra-actions.

6.4.1.2. The conceptualisation of disability and gender as performative identities

Other scholars' theorisations on the performative impact of discourses of gender (Butler, 1993) and disability (DuShong, 2012; Winance, 2007) discuss the ethical implications of normative discourses. Whilst Butler, DuShong, and Winance make important arguments on the ethics of discourse, they do not go far enough to interrogate the ethical implications and the non-innocent nature of the material and inanimate objects that surround concepts of difference (Barad, 2014). Importantly, this thesis has uncovered just how complex it is to define identity concepts such as disability or gender, as bodies, communities, institutions, and environments intra-actively co-constitute one another within specific time and space configurations (Barad, 2014). The concepts are also entangled with historical and cultural practices that affect knowing and being and how dominant social norms within specific spaces reproduce bodies as being disability or being a woman (Thomas, 1999). These bodies are subject to oppressive practice as they deviate from the 'normal' human (i.e. white able-bodied middle-class man) (Braidotti, 2016). Further to this, the thesis has shown how discursive labels attached to bodies/places detract from the lived reality and the capacity of disabled women and men's bodies. This thesis has addressed this by focusing on the daily intra-actions of the research participants to account for the complexity of their lived

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embodiment by incorporating a material focus (i.e. recognising the agency of matter as it intra-act with other matter) rather than a focus on discourse only. Often the respondents distanced themselves from normative social norms and the labels of disability, woman and man (attached to bodies and material objects) as they materially-discursively challenged the oppressive practices that these terms evoked. Drawing on a feminist posthumanist performative lens, as discussed above, disability and gender identities are not located with the body but are performatively co-constituted within and through the intra-actions of bodies, material objects, and sociomaterial spaces. This was reflected in the way that the respondents behaved and how they materially-discursively presented their bodies around people and sociomaterial spaces (e.g. covering legs with trousers or walking behind other people to avoid them seeing their limp). The implications for practice are discussed next.

6.4.2. Implications for practice

The implications discussed in this subsection address a gap in previous critical performative research by focusing on the material as well the discursive, and providing the practical applications of the thesis (Cabantous et al., 2016). The findings of the thesis contributes to the wealth of literature that demonstrates how performative norms enacted within a neoliberal capitalist society affect the experiences of those labelled as ‘other’ by the dominant members of society, namely white, able-bodied, middle-class men (Braidotti, 2006, 2013a, 2019). Those who deviate from these dominant norms of privilege are socially and economically disadvantaged and excluded. This exclusion is the result of the performative enactment of disembodied and dehumanised societal and institutional policies and practices that privilege white, able-bodied, middle-class men. Often, these exclusions are presented as the fault of the individual (i.e. breaking attendance policies) rather than the inflexible systems based on able-bodied or masculine norms: this is a consequence of neoliberal capitalism on those with an impairment and different priorities (Charmaz, 2019). Aligning with previous studies (e.g. Knights, 2019, 2015; Pullen and Rhodes, 2015), many of the participants implicitly and explicitly discussed that rigid, dehumanised, and disembodied organisational practices and policies discriminated against their impairments and their individual ability level. To address this, individual and collective action is needed within institutions to disrupt these exclusionary practices and transform the negative discourses of binary thinking to “affirmative values” (Braidotti, 2019, p. 33). The findings from this project challenge the current systems of work in organisations, particularly mainstream employment, and urge organisations to critically reflect on their policies and practices and where needed alter these to fully include diverse groups of workers.

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Importantly, any changes need to be made with ongoing consultation with those who would directly use and benefit from these changes to policy and practice – to prevent future exclusions.

The changeable support requirements of employees' need to be recognised in all organisations. This can be addressed through diversity training and having more awareness, but also through facilitating more communication between HR, line managers, and employees so that the support systems are regularly assessed with the involvement of those who benefit from them. The type of communication does not always have to be face-to-face but could include email, phone calls, or surveys and questionnaires. This type of contact, however, should be used cautiously to avoid the disabled employees having to adhere to a disembodied procedure (i.e. filling in a survey) rather than HR professions working face-to-face with the individual to observe and address any concerns. Additionally, as shown in the literature review and in the data, many individuals fear the reactions of their employers when they disclose their disability or admit their struggles with their job role (Frndak et al., 2015; Santuzzi et al., 2014; von Schrader et al., 2014; Jans et al., 2012; Irvine, 2011). Therefore, employers need to be proactive in their ability to notice any decline in a person's work and assess if and how this person may need some support from the organisation without them fearing the loss of their job. Importantly, this support needs to be appropriate and not fall into a helper-helpless dynamic which reinforces ableist material-discursive practices (Mik-Meyer, 2016). Along with improved communication, it is vital that organisations and employers shift their attitudes and their approach to organisational behaviour and performance expectations to incorporate and value the whole range of human ability. There is also a need for employers to be more accommodating of life events or situations that may be beyond the control of their employees. Employers cannot continue to have a disembodied approach to their workforce (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015) as this will result in ongoing sociomaterial exclusions.

The type of support requests varied across the data, however, most of the support provided in mainstream employment was often perceived as "concessions to an 'ideal' norm" (Foster, 2018, p. 193). This is an important point which employers need to engage with. There needs to be more recognition and acceptance that not every employee will engage with their job role or organisation in the same way. This is crucial in order to break the hold of capitalist expectations which sees disabled people as "malfunctioning machines" (Solarch, 2016, p. 81). Organisations need to be more proactive in understanding their legal and moral duties towards their employees to overcome the fear and uncertainties reported in

this thesis and previous studies (e.g. Lindsay et al., 2019; Burke et al., 2013). For instance, employers should be more flexible and accommodating so differences in ability are not seen to be a liability but are viewed as an opportunity to be more inclusive and representative of the range of human bodies. To achieve this, job roles need to undergo a process of transformation to allow for jobs roles to be created for a person and their situation rather than expecting all applicants to adhere to a one-size-fits-all approach (Syma, 2019). Not everyone is 'able' to work full-time, part-time, or full days, nor should they be required to if they cannot comfortably do so. However, as shown in the data many people are living to work rather than working to live, with some of the respondents leaving work to go straight to bed. If organisations changed their entrenched capitalist ideology, then they could have possibly arranged a working arrangement which suited their employees embodied abilities. Whilst this appears to disrupt the working environment, organisations and employers need to be more loyal and open to the diversity of their employees. One of the ways to practically address these shortcomings is to establish contact and engage with organisations which deal with diversity in their day-to-day lives such as sheltered organisations (e.g. Able-Industries) or supported employment agencies (e.g. Remploy). This was evidenced as good practice during the data collection. By engaging with these types of organisations this will allow employers to disrupt the discussed exclusionary practices, that are informed by stereotypical discourses. For instance, by seeing how disabled workers can work employers can learn how to include these individuals in their workplace in an inclusive way. The chapter next considers the implications for policy before moving on to discuss the strengths and limitations of the project.

6.4.3. Implications for policy

Within this thesis I have situated the historical and current cultural and political climate that surrounds the data. Capitalist and neoliberal ideology, coupled with economic insecurity and the austerity measures enacted by the Government in recent years, has resulted in those who need to access support the most to be subject to abject insecurity and uncertainty in their ability to access services and obtain employment (Charmaz, 2019; Thomas, 2016; Roulstone, 2015; Cross, 2013). As shown in the literature, there is a lack of trust and faith in governments' and organisations' ability to provide fair and just support for disabled women and men (Glover, 2019). In relation to the UK government's support, often the process is far too complex (this is a sociomaterial exclusion), and the supporting information and application forms are filled with jargon that working-class layman, and arguably even those who are highly educated (including myself) cannot fathom (Roulstone, 2015). The

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difficulties to access financial support, such as Access to Work, creates stress and anxiety for the claimants which is deeply embodied. Similarly, the support that is given to employers/organisations on the government website is lacking and/or seemingly poorly accessed which contributes to the lack of awareness on support systems; this further contributes to the sociomaterial exclusions evidenced above in Chapter 5. The government needs to generate awareness and instil knowledge that institutions (including their own) need to provide *ongoing* material *and* moral support to disabled women and men. Many individuals have conditions that fluctuate over time, or their conditions/symptoms change. As their abilities changes so too will the support they need. It is suggested here that the government, specifically the Equality Office and the DWP need to acknowledge these shortcomings and conduct a review on the processes and procedures currently in place. This review is needed to take stock of the current issues and seek to address them, such as rewriting benefit forms to make them more accessible for those with different intellectual abilities. Overall there is a need for a more embodied and considerate approach from relevant government departments so that those who engage with these services can feel they are valuable citizens and not a drain on society resources. If the government wants to reduce the number of unemployed or underemployed disabled individuals, the current systems and practices systemic within the government, society and organisations need to be challenged to disrupt the norms that continue to reify social injustice.

There also needs to be a national (and international) policy drive towards more education on diversity knowledge and awareness for children, and this also needs to be a prominent part of mandatory occupational training for all industries. If children are exposed to diversity and taught from a young age that bodily variation is ‘normal’ and that everyone should be afforded the same opportunities in life regardless of their identity label, this will improve equality relations and inclusive practices both inside and outside of the workplace (Sarpong, 2019). Nonetheless, whilst this concept seems an easy fix, recent events pertaining to a primary school’s initiative to develop awareness of diversity and the Equality Act (2010) within a Birmingham mainstream school demonstrates how this can be resisted. The school started to include story books with different family units (e.g. same-sex parents) to introduce and promote awareness of the LGBTQI community to their pupils (in a non-sexual manner) (BBC News, 2019). This was met with great resistance with protests forming from the Muslim community as they argued it went against their cultural beliefs. Although some schools backed down and removed these books, one school has maintained the need for this material to promote equal treatment within society (Kotecha, 2019). This demonstrates how resistance can materialise when institutions attempt to alter or implement new policies and

practices. This resistance illustrates why segregated institutions that cater to a specific demographic remain (e.g. specialist schools, religious schools, sheltered workshops), as it is materially and discursively difficult to accommodate everyone's needs/requirements.

Specific to disability, there has been education material developed (e.g. Disability Action Alliance, 2015; Adock and Remus, 2006) which provides child-friendly explanations, activities, and resources to generate awareness. The activities focus on the experiences and the physical and cognitive barriers that individuals can face in their environment for a range of different impairments (e.g. heard of hearing, limited eyesight, autism, being in a wheelchair). Although generated for students this could also be useful as a free resource for staff training in organisations, one of which (Disability Actions Alliance) is endorsed by the government. Although references to disability resources are included on the government website the current analysis reveals that this does not appear to be utilised by employers. More recently, technological advancement has allowed for the Open University Business School to use virtual and augmented reality to develop a virtual inclusion project: "The project team designed and delivered a series of school workshops using virtual reality technology, aimed at allowing a participant to walk in the shoes of someone from a minority or disadvantaged background" (Krasodmski-Jones et al., 2019, p. 3). This is a type of project that could also be used to provide awareness of disability in both schools and organisations.

6.5. Strengths and limitations of the research

There are a number of strengths and limitations of this project which will be discussed in this section. The data was collected via an opportunistic sample, therefore, the demographics of those who took part were skewed. For instance, the majority of the respondents were white and British, and the findings reflected their experiences which could not be generalised to other countries, nor to other nationals living in Britain or other ethnic groups. However, the first ethnographic study was more balanced with the research participants being a mix of white, Asian, Polish, and Latvian. Any future research which explores the experiences of disability needs to focus on a more representative sample, and recruit participants from multiple ethnicities to account for the experiences of all those who work in the UK. Additionally, the age of research participants did not represent a good spread of working-aged adults (18-64), with the mean age being 50 (mainstream mean age 49; sheltered mean age 50). The sample, therefore, is only 'representative' of those in the latter stages of the employment. A strength of this is that the participants have a richer employment history to draw upon and they were able to discuss their experiences of working in multiple types of

employment. This was particularly useful as it provided an opportunity to see how material-discursive practices, over time, have affected their experiences and in what way.

A further limitation of this project relates to the small number of interviews with those in mainstream employment. Whilst more interviews were planned there were disruptions such as the fluctuating health of those who had initially agreed to an interview and then had to cancel (this happened on multiple occasions), and the disruption related to my health (scheduled surgery for endometriosis). This was precipitated by a lack of response to advertisements on social media which limited the possibility of expanding the sample. For this project, however, it is argued that whilst a bigger sample would have provided more data, there was a level of saturation already present as similar experiences were reported. What was missing was a wider range of demographics represented in the sample.

As discussed in Chapter 2, previous studies have focused on one type of disability (e.g. arthritis; Flurey et al., 2018) which provides a very narrow focus of inquiry and infers homogeneity which this project seeks to deconstruct. The focus of this project, therefore, was not restricted to any type of impairment but rather explored how practices enacted within sociomaterial spaces produced disabled and gendered bodies. By focusing on a number of different type of disabilities within one organisation for study one, and multiple disabilities and different mainstream organisations in study two, the analysis has shown how material-discursive practices were similar or different across the data sets. One of the theoretical limitations that surrounds this project is the constraints of the written word which is discursive in nature (Feely, 2016; Butler 1993). The thesis has challenged a number of discursive concepts and has provided evidence that identities such as disability and gender are performative, and come into being through the intra-action of material phenomena and discursive practices which are inseparable. This challenge, however, is bound within the written word. Whilst this limitation cannot be overcome entirely there have been explicit attempts made to highlight how certain words or concepts are used in a way that differs from their normative use.

It is also important to stress that the ethnographic data drawn upon in study one was unique to that particular environment and thus the data is not representative of other sheltered organisations. The policies and practices that were evident in the data were invaluable in demonstrating how the management team and the employees challenged or adapted the material-discursive practices that were present. Contrastingly, although study two obtains insights into multiple experiences of employment, from different levels and sectors, to assess how wider material-discursive practices impact individuals, there are limitations. The data

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was collected via interviews only in the second study, and although rich data was collected there is a lack of transferability to the wider British public. However, as with all qualitative research this is a general weakness, but this is compensated with the quality of the data collected (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The main limitation is that the information provided by the research participants is one-sided in that we only get the employees' perspective and not the employers' perspective. Nevertheless, this type of data collection was more appropriate to answer the research questions which had a specific focus (Bryman, 2016, p. 496). Unlike study one, there was no triangulation of data to assess the accuracy of statements in study two as there was only access to the participant's narration of events; the everyday mundane experiences, which are taken for granted, will not be recorded. Therefore the events discussed are likely to be the two poles of good and bad experiences that they can easily recall (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012).

6.6. Future directions for research

To address the gap in the demographics in both the literature and the present research study, more research, preferably longitudinal research, is needed to assess how the transition into employment affects the embodiment of new employees' experiences (of all nationalities and ethnicities). A longitudinal research design, such as qualitative interviews over a five-year period, for example, would gather data on their embodied experiences on starting and maintaining employment and what sociomaterial exclusions they face based on their binary laden identity markers. This would be a worthwhile project in light of the increasing uncertainty in politics (e.g. Brexit) and the impact that this is having on organisations who are already dealing with the long-lasting effects of austerity measures on consumer behaviour, and their knock-on effect on organisational practices.

The current research reveals how supported employment programmes, specifically the Work Choice programme, are not always effective and can create uncertainty and frustration for both the employee and employer when individuals are sociomaterially excluded from full-time and long-term employment. Specific to sheltered employment, the data revealed the effectiveness of the relationships that the management team at the Able-Industries fostered with managers in mainstream organisations to challenge organisational practices that excludes those labelled as disabled. To expand on these findings research is needed which seeks to explore the impact of employment support services and how their programmes bridge the gap between unemployment and employment for disabled individuals by generating awareness of inclusive work-based practices. Employment support services, such as Remploy, have developed out the growing demand for support to facilitate

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access to mainstream employment for disabled individuals (Remploy, 2019a). Services such as Remploy provide skill development to clients, work with the local community to generate disability awareness, and establish bi-directional relationships with other organisations/institutions to facilitate access to the labour market (e.g. Remploy, 2019b). Whilst successes of employment support programmes have been reported (e.g. Robertson, 2018), research has revealed that a post-code lottery prevails with inconsistencies in funding, size of the service provider, and the type and effectiveness of support given across the country (Bates et al., 2017). This inconsistency is an injustice to those who need to develop the required skills to enter employment but are not offered the opportunity. Therefore, research is needed to assess in greater detail what affects the success outcomes of supported employment clients being able to enter and maintain mainstream employment. To address this, more evidence is needed from multiple stakeholders including service providers, clients who use the service, and employers who hire those who complete supported employment programmes. Additionally, more data is needed from multiple organisational stakeholders to see how they engage with the topic of disability and how they attempt to utilise the available supportive resources to adapt their working policies and practices to prevent sociomaterial exclusions (e.g. lack of access, able-bodied performance expectations).

There are, however, increasing calls for more impactful research. Scholars such as Contu (2020, p. 740) stress that:

Intellectual activism is a precise type of critical performativity where we respond to the ethico-political questions and demands in ways inscribed in – and that assume the traces, memory and weight of – the history of social, economic and epistemic justice movements and politics. More specifically, I mean the struggles against environmentally and economically exploitative relations of neoliberal capitalism, those against heteronormative patriarchy, authoritarianism, imperialism, neocolonialism and white supremacy.

To address this, there is a need for more collaboration between researchers and those who are researched. One particular research method that incorporates this is action research within organisations and communities, for example, working with disabled employees and their employers to make changes to their working environment. This, however, only has a small localised effect and there is a need for broader national and even global activism (Aruzza et al., 2019; Contu, 2020; Goodley et al., 2019).

6.7. Thesis Conclusion

This thesis began by outlining the importance of this project due to ongoing exclusionary practices which perpetuate the ongoing scrutiny and discrimination of those who are socially labelled as disabled, woman, man, and/or a combination of multiple identity constructions which have binary implications. These practices are rooted in historic and cultural norms, notably neoliberal capitalist norms, which place performative expectations onto animate and non-animate matter. This project has thus problematised the essentialist concepts of disability and gender and has argued that these concepts are insufficient to account for the complexity of lived embodied experiences. Further to this, the concept of work also problematises the one-size-fits-all material-discursive practices that govern performative ideals for those labelled as other (Syma, 2019). The review of the literature revealed the ongoing scrutiny that disabled women and men face as their ability to perform everyday tasks is compared to others. The literature review identified a number of gaps in previous studies which included a disembodied approach to exploring identity (Knight and Clarke, 2017); research which has prioritised women's experiences over men and vice versa (Pini and Conway, 2017); research which has quantitatively explored intersectional oppression of disabled women and men leaving the qualitative contextual experiences underexplored (Woodhams et al., 2015b); and research looking at one type of industry, or a particular type of disability to the exclusion of all else suggesting homogeneity for this disability or industry (Sang et al., 2016; Flurey et al., 2018).

To address the gaps identified in Chapter 2, a review of theoretical frameworks which were critical in nature were considered to problematise the shortcomings of current empirical and theoretical knowledge. A review of feminist new materialism and the philosophical underpinnings of the theory were evaluated and chosen for its ability to decentre the human being as the sole focus of research to consider additional non-human factors that affect knowing and being (Coole and Frost, 2010). The chosen framework of feminist posthumanist performativity (Barad, 2007) provided the theoretical rigour to challenge the essentialist and binary framing of identity that reinforces and reproduce social inequality which is evident in the medical model of disability. Instead feminist posthumanist performativity provided the necessary analysis tool to conduct a more complex analysis that explored the ontological inseparability of discursive practices and material phenomena. Importantly, feminist posthumanist performativity demonstrated that the “[p]articular possibilities for acting exist at every moment, and these changing possibilities entail a

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responsibility to intervene in the world's becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering" (Barad, 2003, p. 827).

To address the gap in the research the project moved away from the dominant philosophical positions and instead adopted the philosophical framework of agential realism. Agential realism, coined by Karan Barad, claims that ontology and epistemology are inseparable from one another, which is reflected in the inseparability of the material/object and the discursive/subject, or material-discursive, that scholars argue inform knowing and being (Barad, 2003, 2007). To answer the research questions two types of employment were explored. Study one conducted ethnographic participant observations at Able-Industries over 11 months and conducted interviews with disabled women and men who worked in the sheltered workshop. Study two collected data through semi-structured interviews with disabled women and men who worked in mainstream employment across a number of sectors and levels of employment. The data were analysed using thematic analysis with all the data being coded and grouped together to form themes. These themes were then analysed further with a posthumanist performative perspective to critically appraise the data with a theoretical lens appropriate to answer the research questions.

Empirically the findings have identified how material-discursive practices performatively enact disability and gender as forms of oppression (or not) both inside and outside of the workplace. The analysis also provided evidence of the ongoing and changeable agentic affects of matter which converge in time and space to relationally affect knowing and being. As discussed in Chapter 1 the social norms embedded within organisations and the attached to bodies have changed over time. Therefore, the material-discourses practices that inform organisational behaviours can be challenged and transformed to value all forms of human difference (Braidotti, 2016, 2019). However the analysis revealed that material-discursive practices are bound within power discourses in which most (but not all) of the population has been indoctrinated to accept for fear of consequences. The data revealed that entrenched ableist, gendered and capitalist performative norms were embedded within organisational spaces which held bodies accountable to these norms. The practices of measuring bodies against these dominant norms led to exclusionary practices of bodily production that performatively enacted disability, femininity, and masculinity as forms of oppression. The entanglement of neoliberal capitalism further complicated these experiences as the onus is placed on the individual for being responsible for their own success and failures, therefore current organisational institutions are not held accountable to these oppressive practices nor responsible for their employees' well-being (Lazzarato, 2009).

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Within study one at the sheltered workshop, whilst there was evidence of exclusionary practices these were not constant and there was evidence that the management team proactively sought to transform oppressive practices, rather than reproduce them. Contrastingly, within mainstream employment the onus on overcoming exclusionary practices was placed onto the individual who often had to enact strategies, such as moving workplaces or leaving employment, to overcome the performative enactment of their disability or gender as forms of oppression within the workplace.

From a feminist posthumanist perspective, the actions of current global governments and organisational institutions are destabilising the earth's climate for living matter habitation (e.g. deforestation, pollution, fracking) (Braidotti, 2013a; Coole and Frost, 2010). Therefore the implications of the material-discursive practices that enact mass production and mass marketing that affect the workplace also have an relational impact on both living and non-living matter: both of which are used for commodification and consumerism purposes (Braidotti, 2013a). The findings indicate that organisations are key sites for transformative affirmative ethical actions to overcome oppressive practices.

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Appendix 1: Field note extract

Nadeemah brought a big box over with some thin orange coated wire with a metal covering in the middle of the ten-inch wire. She had a plastic tube that she needed to take the lid off (if it wasn't off already) and then put a certain number in (looked between 8-10). Mary had to move a large box that was creeping on to her desk space from the plugs that Bob was packaging. He said that it was fine for her to move it, but she said that she couldn't lift it as she has a bad back and so would have to slide it across the table. I asked about her struggling to lift and she said that she has had rheumatoid arthritis from being 15 years old. She gave Mary a wooden block which she needed to measure the wires on to make sure they were the correct size. Once everyone had got settled and were getting on with the job I asked if people would be ok if I took some notes, I mentioned that I had made notes on getting home last time but had struggled to remember specific information such as how long individuals had worked there for and what days they worked. Mary asked me to speak up, it was noisy in the workshop, as she was deaf in one ear and couldn't hear that well. So I repeated my requested of making notes but at a higher volume. They all said that this would be fine but I tried to keep very brief notes to keep disruption to a minimum. Mary asked me if I was called Gemma or Emma, she knew it was one of them but couldn't remember, so I confirmed that it was Gemma. She then said that writing notes would be fine as long as she wasn't having to do the writing. I laughed and said no. I noticed that Mary was struggling to take the lids off the tubes if they were not already off and even a couple of the guys sat on either side of her (she was sat at the end of the table – at the head) were struggling to get the lids off when they saw her struggling with it. Nadeemah came over a joked asking how many people were helping her with her job. Sarah mentioned the issues with the lids to Nadeemah but she didn't realise how hard it was for her to take the lids off. Nadeemah just took some of the lids off for her.

9.30 am: Diana came in and was being very theatrical with her hands in the air saying 'Chelsea!!'. I figured that she was a football fan and Chelsea had recently won a game. She provided much amusement for a lot of people who were laughing at her. Diana talked and greeted people as she walked down the central isle of the workshop to speak to one of the supervisors (Shaun). She walked up to an African man who was Deaf and touched his shoulder asked him if he was ok and gave him a thumbs up. She then went on to try and see if he liked football by mimicking kicking a football and heading a ball which made everyone laugh. She asked Shaun what the sign was for football and he didn't know so he asked an

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older Deaf gentleman what the sign was for football by mimicking kicking a ball. He then signed to the other black man the sign for football. Although a funny example this gave me an indication on some of the barriers of communication that occurs in the workshop. There are around 5 d/Deaf people and there is only a translator present Monday and Tuesday mornings.

On looking around I noticed that the Team leaders (Muhammad and Nadeemah) along with the workshop floor supervisor (Shaun) were where in the back office having a brew and eating biscuits. The door was open and they were keep an eye on the workshop (that they could see). I noticed that they were looking in my direction a lot, it was a little bit awkward for me as I had an inclination that they were talking about me, most likely to discuss how they were going to deal with my presence and what they were happy to let me do etc. I also notice people signing a sheet behind the table I was working on, I figured that it would be choosing lunch or something like that, however Ryan got up and signed the sheet, went away, came back and then wrote something on it again. When he sat back down and started getting back on with his work and said that I notice that he and a few others had been signing a sheet so I wondered what it was for. He said that you needed to sign with a time when you went to the toilet and again when you came back. Daniel didn't elaborate as to why, so I assume there has been some issues in the past where people have been absent for too long when taking toilet brakes. It baffled me why this would need to be done, so maybe this could be a question to ask one of the managerial team in the future.

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Appendix 2: Ethical clearance

From Dr Duncan Banks

To Gemma Wright, FBL

Subject *“An exploration of gender and disability in the workplace: A comparison of mainstream and sheltered employment.”*

HREC Ref HREC/2015/1972/Wright/1

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given a **favourable opinion** by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee. Please note that the OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and their Frameworks for Research Ethics.

Please make sure that any question(s) relating to your application and approval are sent to Research-RECReview@open.ac.uk quoting the HREC reference number above. We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible so that your research is not delayed in any way.

At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Regards,



Dr Duncan

Banks

Chair OU

HREC

Appendix 3: Interview schedule (sheltered employment)

Demographics

1. Would you mind telling me a little bit about yourself? How long have you worked at the workshop for?
2. How old are you? Can you tell me about your education background i.e. qualifications?
3. Have you worked for other organisations? Have you ever done any work as self employed?
4. Describe a typical day when you come to work?
 - a. What do you enjoy about your job
 - b. Do you find anything difficult about your job?
5. Can you tell me a bit about your conditions?

Recruitment

6. How did you find out about the workshop?
7. How did you apply for a job at the workshop? What was your experience when applying to come work here did you have an interview?
 - a. *Did you have any concerns when you were applying for the job?*
 - b. *How did you feel applying to work in a manufacturing workshop? Did you feel that being a women might influence the decision of the interviewer, or your suitability for the job?*
8. Have you had another job before working at Watford Workshop?
 - a. What did you do in your previous employment?
 - b. Why did you stop working there?
9. What has been your experience in the past when you sought employment?
 - c. *Did you experience any issues?*
 - d. *Did you disclose that you had a disability?*
10. Is there anything else you want to say about your experience of seeking employment?

Employment

11. What does your job role entail? What do you do when you come to work?
12. How do you find the pace set for you to work at the workshop? Do you feel like you can work to the best of your ability for the different jobs you are given?

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13. If you were to make a mistake in any of the jobs you have been asked to do, would you feel comfortable telling a member of staff?
14. As you do lots of different jobs are there any particular jobs you do like doing at the workshop? and why?
15. Are there any particular jobs you don't like doing at the workshop? And why?
16. Do you find any of the jobs difficult because of any of your impairments/condition?
17. IS there are arrangement that had to be made to your workstation such as a special table, PC, a designed chair etc.?
 - a. How did you go about getting this arranged?
18. Did you need any form of special arrangements to your workplace or work schedule in a previous job (if they had any)?
19. Do you do any educational classes at the workshop? How do you find them?
20. Do you do any form of educational training outside of the workshop?
21. Do you do any of the training offered at the workshop?
 - a. How do you find the training available and the assessment that take place?
22. What opportunities do you like having at the workshop (i.e. working in the kitchen (woman); driving the van (men))?
23. What do you like about this type of work? Do you like working in an open environment?
24. Do you like working as a team or do you prefer working by yourself on a particular job?
25. How do you get on with the team leader and management staff at the workshop?
26. Do others you work with, help you with any issues you may experience at work?
27. How have you found working with other people that have disabilities/impairments/conditions in the workshop?
 - a. *Do you feel your disability prevents you from possibilities of progression in your current place or somewhere else?*
 - b. *Do you feel people understand your disability or treat you differently?*
28. What is the ratio of men to women in your current employment?
 - a. *Does being a woman/man influence your current job at all? How? Has it influenced your previous work experiences? How?*
 - b. *Have you ever been treated differently from other women because of your disability? Think about work situation but also social situations*

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29. Thinking about the workshop, do you think it is a good place to work for women?
Why or why not?
30. Is there any difference in the ways in which work is allocated to men and women? Is there any difference in the ways in which men and women are treated here?
a. Are there any exceptions to this?
31. What does the organisation do to support you in your job?
a. Is this different from support you have received in previous employment?
32. Is there any other opportunities you would like at the workshop? i.e. work placement
33. Would you like any changes to be made in the way that they workshop is run? i.e. longer breaks, better pay.
34. Do you do any volunteering work outside of working in the workshop? i.e. charity shops, clubs etc
35. How do you feel about taking part in activities that seek to raise funds for the workshop?
36. What would be your ideal job?
37. Have you ever considered other jobs or other organisations?
38. Is work your only source of income?

Identity

39. Why is work important for you?
40. What motivates you to come to work every day?
41. If you could chose not to work would you?
42. (Women) Would you like to work on any of the equipment jobs if you were asked?
Gluing the gloves,
43. (Men) Would you like to work in the kitchen or office if you were asked?
44. If you were to describe yourself in a job application, what would you include?
45. Thinking about your specific job, what are the things you are very good at?
46. How many jobs have you had?
47. Do you generally feel confident in applying for jobs?
a. can you think about examples (i.e. when you felt confident and when you didn't)
48. Do you feel having a disability has any impact on your job, or your aspirations?
a. why?
b. How does it impact? This might not just be in your own feelings and experiences but also anything else such as others behaviour or attitudes?
49. Do you see any difference in how you see yourself and how others see you?

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- a. can you think about some examples (i.e. any negative experiences of how others treated you in a public place? What about a private place? previous job?).

50. Do people treat you differently once they know you have a disability?

Support

51. Do you feel like you have enough help and support from the management team should you need or want it?

- a. *If yes, what really helps you?*
- b. *Is there any particular type of support that you want from them?*
- c. *Is support something you would feel comfortable asking for if you needed it?*
- d. *What type of support would be most beneficial to you?*

What is the thing or things that would improve your life?

what is the thing or things that would improve your work life?

52. Do you feel like you could talk to any of the staff about any issues you might be experiencing?

53. Do you feel like you get enough support from your friends at the workshop?

54. Do you feel like you have enough support outside of work such as from your family and friends?

- a. *If yes, what really helps you?*
- b. *Is there any particular type of support that you want from them?*
- c. *Is support something you would feel comfortable asking for if you needed it?*
- d. *What type of support would be most beneficial to you?*

55. Would you feel comfortable asking for some time off if you felt you needed it?

56. What do you think your organisation/employer should do to attract more people with disabilities?

- a. *Should they do this?*
- b. *Is there anything in terms of the working space at the workshop that you would like to change?*

57. What should the government do to support employment of individuals with disabilities?

58. In your opinion has the current economic situation and governments policy changes in the UK impacted you at any stage during your employment, if so how?

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59. Finally, is there anything you would like to add about your life, your work, or on anything that I have not asked such as any more examples of experiences. And is there anything you would like to ask me about the interview.

Appendix 4: Sheltered interview extract

Int: yeah. urm what, can you please tell me what type of organisations Able-Industries is and what are the main aims of the organisation?

Joyce: urm Able-Industries is a sheltered workshop, right we don't use that name anymore, because it's got funny enough quite negative connotations to it

Int: yeah

Joyce: but it was originally set up in 1963, urm because there was a view at that time that there must be employment for disabled people, so every council set up an employment place and put all the disabled people in there

Int: ok

Joyce: and these places it was, nobody bothered whether it had real work or whether it made money or didn't make money

Int: hmm

Joyce: or whether people had much to do or not much to do

Int: yeah

Joyce: and the people that came, if you wanted to work fine but if you just want a drink of tea that was fine as well

Int: [chuckles]

Joyce: and as time has progressed that has changed, so now Able-Industries as we've dropped the sheltered bit

Int: hmm

Joyce: urm basically is providing skills and development training so that people can move on from here into mainstream employment

Int: yeah

Joyce: where we can't urm move them for whatever reason on to mainstream employment, we do still expect them to be pushing themselves to achieve the best they can while there with us

Int: yeah

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Joyce: so it's generally about supporting people with learning difficulties and disabilities

Int: hmm

Joyce: to get the best out of their selves

Int: yeah

Joyce: and go as far as they want to go and as far as they can

Int: yeah

Joyce: in personal life as well as working life.

Int: yeah. So what is your role within the organisation?

Joyce: so my role is, was called general manager, now I'm called chief executive

Int: ok

Joyce: the reason for that all the meetings I went to, you find that all the charities have chief execs

Int: yeah

Joyce: because they're all into you know the titles and the corporate thing.

Int: yeah

Joyce: so I turn up as general manager and everybody is like, 'oh is your boss going to come?', urm so we decided that I needed to change my name to chief executive just so that when I'm at meetings everybody understand that

Int: yeah

Joyce: I am actually running the organisation. Urm sometimes I still use general manager but it depends what, what I'm doing or what I'm applying for, but my role is to oversee the whole of the workshop, to check with the finances to make sure we have enough funds to pay everybody

Appendix 5: Interview schedule (mainstream employment)

Demographics

1. Would you tell me a little bit about yourself, so how old you are and some information about your disability?
2. Tell me about your family background i.e. are they married or cohabiting? Any children?
3. What is your education background i.e. qualifications?

Recruitment

4. Do you generally feel confident in applying for jobs?
 - a. *can you think about examples (i.e. when you felt confident and when you didn't)*
5. On an application form how would you describe yourself in terms of your disability?
6. For your current or latest employment do you think you have been discriminated against?
 - b. *how have you experienced the discrimination*
 - c. *why have you been discriminated against – being a woman, disabled, or both.*
7. Have you ever experienced discrimination when trying to get a job?
 - a. *Did you disclose that you had a disability?*
8. Were your colleagues aware that you have a disability?
 - a. *Did or does your disability impact any colleagues when you work?*
 - b. *Is it still an issue now?*
9. During any of your previous employment history have you experienced any issues in either gaining employment or whilst in employment?
 - a. *What did you do in your previous employment?*
 - b. *Why did you stop working there?*
10. Is there anything you want to say about your experience of seeking employment?

Employment

11. How did you come to work at your current job?
 - a. How long have you worked at in your current job?
 - b. What does your job role entail?
 - c. *have any adjustments been made at work?*
 - d. *Was your wage the same as other employee in same or similar positions?*

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12. How many jobs have you had?
13. Describe a typical day when you come to work?
 - a. What do you enjoy about your job
 - b. Do you find anything difficult about your job?
14. How do you feel about your job?
15. Do others that you work with help you with any issues you may experience in day to day activities?
16. Do you feel your disability has hindered your career progression in your current job or somewhere else?
 - a. Do you feel having a disability has any impact on your job, or your future aspirations?
 - i. why?
 - ii. How does it impact?
17. Do you feel people understand your disability?
18. Do people treat you differently because of your disability?
 - a. *any particularly good or bad experiences*
 - b. *Does it depend on the situation?*
 - i. *Employment, home, parenting*
19. Do you think that having a disability has an impact how you see yourself?
 - a. *Can you be more specific?*
20. Are you treated differently from other women because of your disability?
21. In your experience are women treated the same as men in your current employment?
 - a. *Are there any exceptions to this?*
 - b. *Are there specific roles assigned to men and women?*
22. Does anyone else work in the organisation also have a disability (physical, mental, intellectual, illness etc)
 - a. *Do you think they are treated differently because of their disability or gender?*
23. How has your job affected your general confidence in interacting with others at work and outside of work?

Are you aware of the disability legislation for example anti-discrimination acts?

Support

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24. Do you feel like you have enough help and support in your current employment should you need or want it?
- a. If yes, what really helps you?*
 - b. Is there any particular type of support that you want from them?*
 - c. do you feel comfortable asking for support if you needed it?*
 - d. what would you do if you didn't get the support you needed?*
 - e. What type of support would be most beneficial to you?*
25. Do you have a specific contact in the workplace who gives you support and advice?
26. Do you feel like you have enough support outside of work such as from your family and friends?
- a. If yes, what really helps you?*
 - b. Is there any particular type of support that you want from them?*
 - c. do you feel comfortable asking for support if you needed it?*
 - d. What type of support would be most beneficial to you?*
27. What do you think your organisation/employer does enough to employ people with disabilities?
- a. Do they do enough to support workers with a disability in career progression?*
28. Finally is there anything you would like to add about your life, your work, or on anything that I have not asked such as any more examples of experiences. And is there anything you would like to ask me about the interview.

Appendix 6: Mainstream interview extract

Int: so you've said a little bit about what your disability is

Colin: yeah, I suffer from chronic pain sort of just below my rib cage down to my feet

Int: ok

Colin: into my toes even

Int: yeah

Colin: which was caused by, I got out of the car, I was going into work at half past six one morning

Int: hmm

Colin: busy busy busy, massive tender going in, I used to work in the commercial side of the construction industry

Int: ok

Colin: and urm I got out of the car and went oh that hurt and I went into work, my boss came in and said "bloody hell Colin you don't look well", I said "I'm really not well" and urm went to go see physio and she couldn't believe I'd actually driven a car, called an ambulance

Int: oh my god!

Colin: and I was in hospital for a little while, I'd ruptured two disks, completely gone not just

Int: yeah

Colin: herniated just popped, urm I was rubbing bone on bone, very nasty anyway

Int: yeah

Colin: urm anyway I end up having an L3 L4 L5 fusion, so I've got lots of nuts and bolts in my back

Int: yeah

Colin: but what it didn't do was get rid of the pain

Int: from your nerves

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Colin: from my nerves

Int: yeah

Colin: so it's neuropathic pain

Int: yeah

Colin: which is incredibly debilitating, I'm in pain all the time, it never ever stops

Int: yeah

Colin: just some days are better than others

Int: yeah

Colin: and today isn't too bad but it's not brilliant

Int: yeah

Colin: Sunday I couldn't get out of bed

Int: hmm

Colin: I just go through this cycle of urm

Int: yeah

Colin: because of the job that I did, I was the commercial manager and I was looking at that time I was working with the government and working on the building future schools programme

Int: ok

Colin: and travelling all around the country all around Europe and I just can't do it

Int: yeah

Colin: and even when I went back to my original job which involved a lot of long hours a lot of running about, sitting down, going to meetings

Int: hmm

Colin: here there and everywhere and I physically cannot do it

Int: yeah

Colin: if I went back to work for one day I would be 2 weeks possibly recovering

Appendix 7: Initial data codes

<u>Top Code</u>	<u>Sub-code</u>	<u>Top code</u>	<u>Subcode</u>
Ability		Employment	<i>Accessibility</i>
Awareness			<i>Accommodations</i>
Behaviour			<i>Appraisal</i>
Bullying			<i>Change</i>
Career ambition			<i>Comfort</i>
Career change			<i>Complaints</i>
Career progression			<i>Consequences</i>
Communication			<i>Demonstration</i>
Community			<i>Disclosure</i>
Culture			<i>Discomfort</i>
Disability	<i>Acceptance</i>		<i>Dislike</i>
	<i>Blame</i>		<i>Effort</i>
	<i>Disruption</i>		<i>Employment transitions</i>
	<i>Management</i>		<i>Empowerment</i>
	<i>Proof</i>		<i>Enjoyment</i>
	<i>Type of disability</i>		<i>Exploitation</i>
	<i>Visible or obvious</i>		<i>Finances</i>
	<i>Discrimination</i>		<i>Funding_Fundraising</i>
			<i>Inclusion</i>
Embodiment and Emotions			<i>Intervention</i>
Equality			<i>Isolation</i>
Exclusion			<i>Job loss</i>
External socialisation			<i>Job role</i>
Family and friends			<i>Job search</i>
Gender			<i>Lack of understanding</i>
Goals			<i>Learning</i>
Hobbies			<i>Legislation</i>
Household chores			<i>Mistake</i>
Humour			<i>Observation</i>
Hypocrisy			<i>Openness</i>
Identity	<i>Organisational</i>		<i>Opportunity</i>
	<i>Self-identity</i>		<i>Organisational goals</i>
	<i>Social-Identity</i>		<i>Personal investment</i>
			<i>Physical space</i>
Ill health			<i>Politics</i>
Independence			<i>Pressure</i>
Judgement			<i>Procedures</i>
Life transitions			<i>Productivity</i>
Material objects			<i>Redundancy</i>
Medical intervention			<i>Relationship with staff</i>
Motivation			<i>Reward</i>
Normal			<i>Role fulfilment</i>

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Personality_characteristics			<i>Rule breaking</i>
Power			<i>Safety</i>
Predictions of change			<i>Socialisation</i>
Recruitment			<i>Tenure</i>
Disclosure			<i>Time off</i>
Performance			<i>Tiredness</i>
Regret			<i>Treatment</i>
Relationships			<i>Type of employment</i>
Retirement			<i>Uncertainty</i>
Sacrifice			<i>Work disruption</i>
Security			<i>Work experience</i>
Skills			
Stress			
Support given	<i>External</i>		
	<i>Family and friends</i>		
	<i>Organisation</i>		
	<i>Personal</i>		
Support needed or wanted	<i>External</i>		
	<i>Family</i>		
	<i>Organisation</i>		
	<i>Personal</i>		
Technology			
Time			
Travel			